



Pax et bonum.

THE FRANCISCAN

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JEGARATA

*Brother Randolph with a class of students from the Evangelists'
Training College*



Eastern Asia



CHRISTIANITY has never taken strong root in the Far East. The seed sown in China by the early Jesuit missionaries produced only small shoots, which soon withered away. In modern times the Roman Catholic Church became well established in what is now Vietnam under French influence. It is impossible to predict what will be the future for it in the light of the present tragic and confused situation. The article on Vietnam included in this issue was written several months before renewed hostilities engulfed South Vietnam with suffering scarcely possible to believe, in spite of twenty-three years of warfare. It almost reads like ancient history now. But its relevance remains, and indeed is enhanced. For here you will see the threat which hangs over Christians as a result of the triumph of the Vietcong.

We all know too well that missionary work has been tarred with the colonial brush. But the fact remains that Christian missions have always been more successful among peoples emerging from a comparatively undeveloped society. Countries with a high culture and well established national life have been more resistant. The success story of work among the Dayaks of Borneo, also in this issue, ends with the threat of a newly militant Islam with state patronage. This does not end the tale of woe. The picture which we are given of Christianity in Japan can hardly be said to be encouraging. It may be that Christian missions there have been too puritanical in the past. At any rate there seems to be a gulf between the Japanese people's innate sense of what is right and their understanding of the demands which the gospel makes upon them. Thus they simply think that Christianity is wrong.

It is easy to point to the mistakes of missionaries in the past. It is not at all certain that we can avoid more mistakes now or in the future. In spite of much failure, there has also been some success, the true success which gladdens the heart of God. For the essence of the gospel has been grasped by some, if only by a few. God's love for all mankind is endless. Christians are agents of that love, though they are effective only in so far as they truly abide in Christ. It is this love which has to be brought to bear, by prayer and charitable acts, by dialogue and mutual respect, upon the peoples of many languages and cultures in Eastern Asia.

The Minister General's Letter

April, 1975.

My dear friends,

Community. This word is on the lips of so many today and is the ardent desire of many hearts. Some of us have been fascinated by the story of Father Graham Pulkingham of Houston and the remarkable Christian community that has come into being centred in the Church of the Redeemer, and are watching with hopeful admiration his efforts to inspire community in England and other countries. We see, too, the effort at community being made by the many communes and also the frustration which has made some of them short-lived. At the same time we are aware that in many of the long established Religious Communities of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches with their rich experience of living together some are leaving their Communities. The situation could be summed up in the words of a Benedictine monk : ' After thirty years living in community, I leave to find community '.

The wind of God's Spirit is blowing and we all need to be made new, and no less those of us who form the Society of S. Francis.

Let us first, however, think of these things which must remain before we start tearing up and pulling down. Our traditional communities show us that life together if it is to be truly fulfilling demands as well a discipline and denial of ourselves. A cardinal principle of happy communal life is that each puts the needs of his brothers before his own. This kind of total giving involves a real denial of our own will and desires, which leads to a true freedom.

Secondly we believe that God has called each one of us into community and it is God who binds us together into a unity in his Holy Spirit. Our common life is centred in the Eucharist, and in the partaking we become a Holy Communion. Community is made by God not by ourselves as we allow him to build us into his Body. Our offices and common prayer which surround the Eucharist emphasise this fact.

Then what has gone wrong ? At times our Communities seem no more than a convenient way for the unmarried to live together to enable them to pursue the work they wish with a minimal relationship with each other. Sometimes our Communities are the scene of barbed remarks, jealousy, ambitious pride, cynical and destructive criticism and a ' holier than thou ' attitude on behalf of small cliques who think they alone are Spirit-inspired. And so for the loving, understanding,

believing care that we all yearn for and need we have to go to friends and groups outside.

It seems to me that it is on this level that we have to work hardest—to make the Holy Communion in which we participate day by day a living reality, by really showing compassion, understanding and patient care for each other. 'All the members of our Society of S. Francis are to live together in a brotherhood of which S. Francis is the inspiration and example', says The Way of S. Francis.

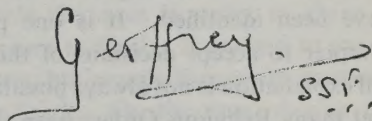
Each of our three Orders will live out this brotherhood in its own distinctive way, but it is this sense of brotherly affection and care which should be felt by all who come into contact with us. In all our households of Brothers and Sisters and in our Third Order groups let us make the Holy Communion an evident reality expressed in our relationship with each other.

While it is true that a Community must have certain basic common principles, it is not a group of like-minded people who snuggle together and purr! Part of the richness of community life is the cut and thrust of argument amongst people who sometimes disagree profoundly and yet care intensely about each other. Community life is not the dullness of uniformity, but the spark of conflict within the overall embrace of an immense charity.

Also community means holding that delicate balance between expressing freely and fully one's personality, and yet being sensitive to one's brothers and being ready to give in and deny oneself that we may all be one.

Who is sufficient for these things? May God, who himself has called us, help us to the attainment of this vision.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Geoffrey', followed by the letters 'S.S.F.' in a smaller, stylized script.

Minister General.

Sister Mary

Sister Mary, of the Second Order at Freeland, died on the morning of Ascension Day, the day on which the three Sisters landed in Australia.

Quarterly Chronicle

Brother Michael writes :

EUROPEAN PROVINCE This summer is a time when the Society as a whole and our Province in particular, will have a number of opportunities to assess the general progress of our life and work. It will be seen from the Intercession Sheet that we shall be holding a number of Chapter meetings and other gatherings of the Brothers and Sisters. It is a Franciscan tradition for Pentecost—the celebration of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit—to be particularly set aside for this purpose. In addition to the Chapters for the Sisters, the Regions and the Province, there will also be a conference for all the Novices. Inevitably, a great deal of the business of such meetings concerns the domestic affairs of the Community, giving us an opportunity to reconsider the work of the various Houses ; our commitment in prayer ; and the ongoing life of the individual members of the Community. It is however, equally important for us to be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the wider context of our witness to the Church and the World—no easy matter when both appear to be in a state of flux ! I have recently had opportunities of meeting with men and women who are responsible for the other Religious Orders in the Anglican Church, as well as the leaders of some of the great Religious Orders in the Roman Catholic Church. On all sides it is clear that Religious have been committed to a re-evaluation of their role. The consequences both for some individual monks and nuns, as well as for some Orders as a whole, has appeared at times severe and disturbing. It is always a shock to the Christian community in particular, when a Religious leaves his Order, or a Community, the monastery or convent with which they have been identified. It is one part of the work of a Community Chapter to accept decisions of this kind. In the nature of things, a full explanation is not always possible, and we must admire the openness that many Religious Orders have shown in these circumstances.

It would be easy to think, superficially, that all this indicated a failure in the ability of the Religious Life to adapt itself to our present world, or even call into question the validity of our particular life. So far as it is understood, the life under vows as a monk, friar or nun, has often appeared in the past as reassuring evidence to the world, of men and women who in spite of everything (including their own

personal failings) represent the stability of a very deliberate surrender of themselves in service to God and man. This 'obedience' has been seen as a real rock of dependence. So for instance, the return of the Religious Orders to the Anglican Church in the last century, was a reassuring sign, not only of our catholicity but through the many prayerful and practical ways in which it was expressed, also as a promise of wholeness and holiness in the Church.

Now, as some Communities withdraw from work or leave their long established convents, it could appear as if yet another firmly based institution is being added to all the political, social or economic establishments which seem unable to meet the demands of the crisis situation in which we live. That there is a crisis there can be no doubt. It is surely however at such a time that the fundamental grounds of our faith and commitment to Christ in His World, are not only put to the test but also reveal their true strength. When the financial and material basis of life is seen to be insufficient of itself to meet man's needs, his spiritual resources become more clearly defined. It is something of this kind which is illustrated in the story about 'Perfect Joy' in the 'Little Flowers of Saint Francis'.

A truer reading of history would suggest that a time of crisis is an opportunity which has been offered by God, for the Religious Orders to stand as a sign of hope to the World—and of encouragement, endurance, and joy as well !

These thoughts came to mind after the profound experience many of us had at the Life Profession of Keith and Colin Wilfred at Hilfield, and Sister Paula at Freeland. In some ways, the lifestyle of our Brothers and Sisters at this level, could hardly seem more dissimilar ; yet on both occasions a large number of people of all ages, but predominantly young, came considerable distances in order to share in the affirmation of Franciscan lives given to God. It seemed to me so clear that it is not a question of places, but people living with purpose, very humbly, by the Power of the Spirit. On the same day as the Professions at Hilfield, three new Aspirants arrived and got caught up in it all. The apparent certainty of Brothers being professed and Brothers who arrive, is balanced by others who, having tested their vocation, leave to find fulfilment elsewhere. Inevitably we ask ourselves what is the future for those who are testing their vocation with us at this time ? Many of the old guidelines appear to have gone, and the sense of surrender to an uncertain future would seem very

great. Yet it is just the readiness on the part of men and women to respond to the overwhelming guidance of the Spirit, away from the crude materialism which is strangling the western world, and towards a liberty which recognises the dignity and eternal destiny of mankind, which constitutes the hope on which our life is based.

This summer, the Knightsbridge Friary will close and in the autumn its contents will be used to furnish the farmhouse at Canterbury from which we hope to make a Franciscan witness of prayer and ecumenical concern. The guidance we were given to establish small friaries has led to a distribution of houses throughout the country in much the same ways as the old 'Homes of Saint Francis' in the time of Brother Douglas. Whatever the future, it will not now be concerned with more buildings but with the *Household of God*. This means that the next firm step—and many after it, will be away from material security and towards spiritual certainty. We ourselves are faced with the challenge of living together and witnessing to the power of our common life ; to rise above those things which so frequently divide. Into that Community of Love we would want to draw all the men and women to whom we are related through service and prayer, recognising the common humanity which we share in Christ. The costliness of giving, like the costliness of receiving, should be enough to lift any group of people out of the temptation to live in the rut of cynicism and defeat, and bring them into a new world of hope where the family of God can really be found in all humanity, worked out daily in the places where we live. Our resources, like our opportunities, are unlimited, provided we look in the right direction. Saint Paul has suggested that we should 'shine like stars in a dark world' and I expect Saint Francis would add that this will only be possible if we are unfailing in our acknowledgement of Brother Sun from whom all light comes—from God himself.

I hope this may be some background for your prayers for us. Will you also remember the Sisters who left for Australia and who, about the time you read this, will commence their life of prayer at Stroud in New South Wales. By a strange 'coincidence' the priest who has just taken charge temporarily of the parish where they will live, first met the friars as a Cambridge undergraduate ! The profession at Freeland, on the day before they left, was very much a Cambridge party, so I am particularly glad to end this note by reporting that Denis—who started the Cambridge house—has made an astonishing recovery and

responded so well to skilful nursing and medical advice, that he hopes to leave hospital in the near future—more lively and animated than he ever was—even if in a wheel chair ! Thanks be to God.

Professions and Clothings

There was a great gathering indeed, as Brother Michael has already described, for the Life Professions of Brother Keith and Brother Colin Wilfred on 5 April. It was an added joy to welcome to Hilfield the Bishop Protector who received their vows. The simple profession of Brothers Thaddaeus, Gregory and Christian took place in the Chapel of the House of the Divine Compassion at Plaistow on 7 February, while Brother Victor made his simple profession at S. Peter's Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, the following day and Brother Barry Alban in the Chapel of S. Francis, Alnmouth, on 15 March. Also in March, three new brothers were clothed as novices ; at Hilfield, Brothers Oswald (Philip Shakespeare) and Dominic Christopher (Christopher Scott) on 12 March and Sean (Kevan MacCormack) at Alnmouth on 18 March. Brother Samuel (Reverend Richard Double) received the habit on 24 April, and Sister Lynda Mary at Compton Durville on 8 April. To all those for whom these events are milestones in their lives, we extend our love and prayers, as also to Sister Clare who prepares now to make her Life Profession in the Community of Saint Francis on 11 July.

Movements

Brother John had been with the group of friars at Alnmouth right back from the start when the House opened in 1961. It is therefore quite a moment when he takes his bow and looks to pastures new. Alnmouth village has a wonderful habit of taking the Brothers right in, and with his popular staging post of the allotment by the roundabout where everyone seemed to pass by at least once a day, every villager knows him well. The indications are that his arrival in Llanrhos in April has been met with equal enthusiasm.

Brother Simeon, who should have been in Africa long ago, will be there (if the latest plan comes to fruition) on 3 May. In the same week, Brother Damian will be going to Hilfield and spending the summer months at the Friary. His move, though only temporary, will give him a long-sought-after opportunity to share in the life of the noviciate. Brother Barry Alban has been cooking at Alnmouth Friary and in April he moved to Hilfield also. Meanwhile, Brother Peter Joseph, still awaiting news for an operation, is up at Plaistow and a most welcome addition to the family there. Brother Ian moved to Ashmore Road, London, at Easter.

Following their visit and conference in Sweden at Eastertide, Brother Frans Eric and Brother Ingmund are planning to remain in Gothenburg where they have been invited to share in the running of a hostel for the summer months. Their work will be mostly among alcoholics and victims of drug addiction. Their presence in the area may well lead to other openings.

Brother Edgar is expected to move from the Friary at Cambridge at the end of June, and will be at Glasshampton for a time. Brother Christian at present in Plaistow will then be taking his place at Cambridge.

Arrivals at Hilfield and Alnmouth

Early in April, we were glad to welcome three new Postulants to the Hilfield Friary to test their vocation : Paul Lester is from Evesham, Stewart Irwin from Walton-on-Thames, and Terry Tastard who came over from a long stay in Africa two years ago when he worked in the editorial department of C.M.S. in London.

In February, the Reverend Vic Filer arrived at Alnmouth ; previously he had been curate of a Parish in East Sheen, London.

Canterbury

Following discussions of the Chapter, it has been decided that our small Friary at Knightsbridge should close on 31 July. The date was meant to coincide with the commencement of new work beginning in Canterbury. However, the old Gatehouse which we have been invited to occupy in the grounds of the S. Nicholas Church and Almshouses in Harbledown has suffered some damage from an articulated lorry, and the renovations are consequently a bigger and longer job. The plan is, however, that Brother Colin Wilfred—at a slightly later date than planned (Brother Builder, be kind to us !) will move to Harbledown with a small team of brothers.

Assisi

On 4 August, Brother Angelo will leave for Assisi where he will spend three months living at the Centro Ecumenico Nordico at the invitation of the Roman Franciscans already there. At present the group at the Centro is made up of four Franciscan Sisters, and one member of each of the Friar Minor, Conventual and Third Order Regular branches of the Franciscan Order : a Capuchin has been invited to join the others and Brother Angelo will be the representative of the S.S.F. investigating the possibility of a Brother spending a longer period, or periods, in the future.

Assisi Reproduction

The Brothers were delighted to have Brother Angelo down at Hilfield when he shared his very magnificent slides of Assisi—which in the event was a very challenging and stimulating lecture on Saint Francis. The Abbot of Nashdom also made a brief visit to the Friary and spoke to the Brothers on S. Benedict and the Order of Saint Benedict today. Dom Wilfrid revealed that he really owes us obedience as a former Companion of S.S.F. !

Focus on the Ashton House Project

Brother Noel writes : Not wanting to reiterate the reasons for the need of houses such as Heathfield, as this was well covered in the last issue of THE FRANCISCAN which was concerned with the work of NACRO : I will draw by way of introduction on a paragraph from a booklet about the Ashton House Project, written by the Senior Probation Officer in Ashton :

‘ The aim of the whole operation (the setting up of the Ashton House Project) is integration of an individual into society. Each year many hundreds (and no-one can be quite precise as to the exact number) of young men who are homeless, are discharged from either Detention or Borstal. A rough estimate

has been given at about ten per cent of the Borstal population . . . It is already known that a very high proportion of young men who fall into this category return to institutions very soon following release from institutions. Such failure is costly, self destructive and can easily become a vicious circle'.

To meet the need for a jumping off point from this circle, towards the end of 1968 'Heathfield' (which is the name of our House) came into being ; the project as a whole being under the auspices of a committee of local people, and staffed by Brothers from the Society of Saint Francis. Six years, nearly seven, have lapsed since the opening of the House, staff has changed, many young men have been resident, yet the need for the Project is as great as ever.

Some things never change : the slag heap still faces the House from across the Manchester Road, and the wind still whips across Ashton Moss onto which the rear of the House faces. Heathfield differs from most other hostels in two main ways : the ratio of staff to the number of ' residents ', and the number of residents. Three staff to six boys sounds excessive when some hostels may have between twenty and thirty residents supervised by say two wardens. But one of the prime reasons for this is that the situation is to be as much a *home* situation as possible and not to be an extension of the institutionalism that many of the residents may have been used to in the past.

The House is also sure of being staffed by at least two brothers while the third is on his monthly leave when he needs to unwind and relax ; and of course when residents produce a negative situation amongst themselves, there is a great need for the staff to be in sufficient strength to offer each other the maximum support.

It is a fact that such a small unit has a tremendous economic disadvantage, compared with say a unit of four or five times its size, *i.e.* higher grants and the absorption of running costs—and of course no-one can predict when circumstances are going to remove one or more residents at any given time. As I write, the numbers are down to just two residents ; during the past month or so, residents have left because of rent arrears or in the arms of the Law. Our last resident to depart from our company did so in the dead of night with the residents' colour television set under his arm !

We take great care about selecting our residents, not that there is a lack of applicants, but we cannot accept one who fails to really show sufficient motivation to the staff of his intention to take up the advantages of this particular project. What then are the expectations put to the applicant for a home at Heathfield ? We expect him to work for his living, hold down employment and contribute financially from his wages to the running of the House. The *rent* at the moment is nine pounds per week. Each resident has his own room, a large communal lounge, dinner each evening prepared by one of the staff, access to the kitchen to prepare his own breakfast, lunch, snacks and the endless cup of coffee—and a front door key to come and go as he pleases. In fact the House tries to operate as any family would towards the eighteen to twenty-one year old.

As well as the responsibilities of working and paying rent, the resident is also required to act responsibly towards his own home—like washing up the kitchen utensils after he's finished with them, keeping his bedroom tidy or as Brother James William says, ' Tidier than Brother Noel's ! ' and seeing that his girlfriend is on the way home at a reasonable hour. Not least, as any resident is only encouraged to

stay with us for two years we also look together and work towards his thoughts and plans for the future.

As can be imagined, the situation dictates that the house and life-style of the brothers who comprise the staff is correspondingly different from the majority of the other friaries. There is a needful 'lack' of structure. Yet, offices are said and we find time for prayer and quiet—even if sometimes it has to be the quiet of sleep! We try not to allow our *religious* life to encroach directly on the life of the residents.

The House has never been the type of place where visitors have been encouraged in great numbers; in fact to have a visiting brother is a rare occurrence by normal standards; needless to say, anyone who is a friend of the Society who happens to drop in must take us as they find us: the lady dashing away with the smoothing iron, doing the lads' shirts, will be Ada, and if the lights are on during the early hours of the morning? . . . anything could be going on! We certainly have had our moments. The odd fire in the middle of the night; 'slight' disagreements at the end of Saturday night out at the pub; lads rejecting the House and rejoining the vicious circle yet again. We have our *other* moments too. The majority of the lads do make a clean break, and only last month we all tidied ourselves up to attend the wedding of one of our residents. He's now married and living in his own home in Ashton. Ask him, he'll tell you what Heathfield is all about.

Novice Conference

A conference for all the novices and postulants of the First Order, sisters and brothers, is planned to take place at Hilfield from 9—13 June. About thirty-five novices and postulants will be present, in this second gathering of its kind to take place in recent years. The first was in 1967.

The occasion will not only bring together the noviciate of the whole country (leaving one or two friaries sadly bereft for a week) but also provide the delightful excuse to invite over Brother Henry who is Novice Tutor at Little Portion Friary on Long Island, Brother James Anthony, Novice Guardian in Tanzania, not to mention the Minister General, Brother Geoffrey who will be addressing the Conference on the first night. The Friary will be overflowing to the point where about fifteen of us will be under canvas.

Population Doubles at Hooke

Brother Anselm writes: Readers of the last bulletin will remember that we sold forty cows and bought two goats, and they will be glad to hear that both were safely delivered of their kids so that now we have four; also that other animals and rural studies in general have got off to a good start with several of the boys acting very responsibly as goatherds, poultry keepers, etc.

We were sorry to lose Howard Pankhurst from Leo House, and welcome to the staff Christopher Preece in his place. The friary family here is the poorer for the loss of Brother Ian who, after seven years in various jobs in the school, has gone on to join Brother Thaddaeus in Ashmore Road. He was successively housefather and school cleaner, but we remember him most as (from one direction) our liaison man with the doctor and a splendid person to whom to turn with (real or fancied) ills, sure of a compassionate and sympathetic welcome. Thank you Ian from all of us. Our new school cleaner has come from Beaminster to join our team of

splendid ladies, most of whom travel to us daily by means of Brother Randall's infallible bus service.

The termly novice is now Brother Alwyn—one of an honourable succession upon whom we depend for many chores which mysteriously remain however carefully the official manpower is organised ; and to whom we give . . . something ? But it is different for each, so there is a good place to stop.

It's All a Matter of Sharing

Brother Juniper writes from Ty'r Brodyr : Closer links have been established with a number of local parishes, and we are so happy that we are able to share our life with so many in joy. Those with whom we have shared our thoughts on prayer and Christian discipleship are seeking to visit us here more casually, which is good.

We are all thrilled to welcome Brother John into the family. He has quickly settled in and always seems to have a dustpan in one hand while the other has taken up the Account books. The Welsh Rally, held this year in Cardiff in May, is at the time of writing our next big event : the Archbishop of Wales will be speaking and it will make a great opportunity for the brothers and Sister Gwenfryd to discover a closer fellowship with those whom they have not yet met in the Province.

Drama on the Door Step

The report from Brother Tristram, Guardian at Fiwila in Zambia, reminds us all that real Gospel encounter often results in low moments as well as high. He writes : We shall never forget the events that took place at Fiwila over the New Year. A fight broke out in Church between two of the men which ended in a stabbing. Our Tertiary, Joan Gorringe, who has been in charge of the hospital now for two years, and who has been coping single-handed since Sister Clare's return to Compton Durville last November, took it all in her stride, even though it meant that on more than one occasion, we all had to flee for our lives !

Things have more or less settled down again, and after a period of feeling very alone, we now have a young student, Giles Rawlinson, a former headboy at Oundle School, helping anywhere and everywhere and generally proving invaluable. Brother Desmond arrived in March from Dar to be with us for three months and many friends from the school have been in to see him and welcome him back. Brother Aidan is settling in wonderfully in Chifubu, a township in Ndola on the Copperbelt ; he has already built up a large worshipping congregation in an area which has had no ministry for some time. It is good to have a place to stay when going to town, and he always makes his visitors welcome in true Geordie style !

Do pray for all the staff at Fiwila, especially for Brother Stephen Lambert who earlier in the year had a rather bad fall and injured his ' good ' leg—but he never complains and just soldiers on. Pray for us too as we approach our annual regional Chapter in August when we shall be trying to seek our future path in Central Africa.

Belfast Friary

Brother Edmund writes : Having Brother David Douglas here for the past six months has brought the opportunity to visit regularly the Crumlin Road Prison, where he has most successfully gained the confidence of many prisoners. I have

become a keen supporter of ' Linfield ', a football team in the parish where I work, and am hoping, perhaps next season, to attend a meet or tournament.

We have enjoyed some most happy visits, including ones from the Archbishop of Canterbury who dropped in during his week's visit to the City ; Bishop John Howe, the Anglican Executive Officer ; Mother Elizabeth came for a week in April, and various extinguished people who ask us constantly to phone the Fire Brigade—a local past-time !

What else ? The bulldozers edge closer ! One returns from a day's work to find half a street missing from across the way. We hope that someday there will again be a thriving community in this part of Belfast, though the new housing in the Shankhill has problems enough already. Yet, in our own context, after establishing a first order and now a third order witness in the Church of Ireland, we do give thanks for all that is possible and manifest and of God ; and we are also very conscious of the foundations laid by Father Charles Preston S.S.F., and the many others who make our life and vocation possible today.

Cambridge Notes

Members of S. Bene't's congregation who work hard for Christian Aid listened with intent to the Reverend Eric Mantle, the Field Staff Administrator when he spoke recently at a Sunday tea-meeting. He obviously valued the interest and practical support of his audience. Other speakers during term meetings were Doctor Mary Berry (Sister Thomas More) and Mrs. E. G. Nugee of the London Diocesan Mothers Union. Doctor Berry in her talk ' Ecclesiastical Chant in the East and in the West ' illustrated with recordings, pointed in a particularly interesting way to the continuity of plainsong from its origins in pre-Christian Judaism.

We record with regret the sudden death of Mr. Bernard Lucas, Bursar of Corpus Christi College. He was responsible for providing the House for the brothers in Botolph Lane, and was always most helpful to them.

Reflections From Over the Border

Brother Bruce writes of ecumenical contacts with Presbyterians : I suppose that Saint Francis drew so many people to him because of his great love for God and for his fellow men. You could say that Saint Francis is a patron saint of unity and has much to teach us today. Living here in the Friary in Edinburgh, I have come to appreciate that although we don't all belong to the same Church, we do all worship and love the same Lord. The Brothers belong to the Episcopal Church, whereas most Christians belong to the Church of Scotland which is of course Presbyterian. After I had read the recent report ' Multilateral Church Conversations in Scotland ' the evidence seemed to suggest there was very little to divide us, and therefore I believe that it is our duty to listen, to learn, and most of all to love our fellow Christians around us and to seek our unity rather than our divisions.

Through the introduction of one of our local Episcopalian priests, shortly after I arrived in Scotland I met the Church of Scotland Chaplain to our nearest hospital and the invitation came for me to help with the visiting of patients. After the Hospital Board had given their blessing I became attached to the Hospital Chaplaincy team. I am guided by the Senior Chaplain and visit in the wards allocated to me—which means I not only visit Episcopalians but patients who belong to other churches

or none. I was also recently asked to visit one of the Presbyterian training colleges and was later asked to conduct a quiet day there.

One Presbyterian said to me that we have much to teach them ; but I would say that they have much to teach us. I know that God is using us here, if we remember that His password is *love*.

Brother William Henry is in the third year of his noviciate in Pilton and describes his life in that Friary : ' Most of my time is not unexpectedly spent in doing things common to brothers in all our friaries ; and through the daily routine, we learn to live in community—learning to live with the brothers that God has given me ; trying to be more loving and more understanding towards them ; trying—with them—to show something of the love of Christ to those who live around us. There is also the life of prayer—without which nothing else that I do would have any meaning, indeed, would not be possible. From this life of prayer flows all that I do. There are various areas of service in which we are involved on the Scheme. I have been working with the F.S.U. (Family Service Unit) who are based in West Pilton helping to run a weekly group for mainly teenage kids of families among whom the F.S.U. is working. A Sister from the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity is also involved with F.S.U., and this in turn led to my spending some afternoons with the pre-school play group run by the S. Paul's Roman Catholic Church. The play-group itself is non-denominational and has a very open atmosphere and of course is desperately needed. I enjoy this work tremendously because I love working with kids, and it makes a natural and good point of contact with Roman Catholics and with our local Convent of Sisters '.

Brother Bruce and Brother William Henry each end their notes with requests that you will remember them in your prayers. As has been said, it really is the basis from which flows all that we do.

Building a Hermitage

Brother Harold writes : ' But what do you *do* ? ' is the question very often asked us by visitors to Shepherds Law. To give an answer is difficult because there is little in the way of a tangible end product and our life can be very varied. In the first place we seek to serve the Lord in a regular evangelical life which is centred upon the traditional Hours of Prayer which have been known to Christendom since the earliest times. We follow in a great tradition which would have been as well known to Saint Francis as to Saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. To an unbeliever it may appear as pointless and a waste, for it is only by reference to God and the dimension of prayer that it begins to take on a meaning. There is that in our life which may be indigestible apart from faith, for we seek to witness to the kingdom of heaven. It is for the sake of the kingdom that we have chosen Shepherds Law, as Francis chose those Appenine hermitages. Saint Francis was doing what many had done before him, though he gave a new twist to the way of the desert Hermits, and combined solitary retirement with an itinerant ministry.

So it is for us ; we are seeking to maintain a balance between withdrawal to a lonely place and a ministry in the world. Our Apostolate in spreading the Good News works out in two ways. First we share our prayer and table with those ' seekers ' who ask to stay with us. It is these people who, in one way or another, have been such a help in the building of the hermitage, and by the end of this year

we hope that the greater part of the work on the walls of the house will have been completed. Then from time to time we make a 'pilgrimage', passing from place to place and sharing in the Christian fellowship wherever we stay. In this way we meet quite a few Tertiaries and Companions. The most important of these journeys is to La Roche Mabile in Normandy in order to share in a similar hermitage run by Frère Jean Claude of the Capuchin Province of Paris. Our aim is to take a small part in the reunion of Canterbury and Rome. So it was a great joy to have had a number of French friars with us for the celebrations in Canterbury last September.

Novices in Tanzania

The noviciate in Tanzania now numbers eight, and a further four postulants arrived at the beginning of this year. These latest arrivals all come from the Lake Nyasa region of Tanzania and were originally introduced to the Society through the safaris undertaken by Brother Basil and Brother Barnaba Mboka and more recently when Brother Wulfrum and Brother William Chivinja went to Liuli last August.

In May the three new novices, Brother Chamala Bwatu, Brother Kenneth Mbunda and Brother Benedikto Peter, followed the accustomed pattern of early novice training by going for three months to the Bible School at Morogoro.

A Present Help in Liverpool

Archbishop Stewart Blanch, before his translation to York, summed up for our Brothers in Liverpool what he felt their work was : to be a family of praying brothers, open and available. Thus the brothers' work continues to broaden out. Brother Harry, now licenced in the Diocese as a Reader, has been elected on to the P.C.C. of S. Anne's Church, Stanley. Brother Eric over recent months has been involved in what is known as 'Intermediate treatment' for children at risk in the Tue Brook area, serving as a member of an open circle pastoral group—an imaginative approach to this demanding field of work. Brother Derek has also been invited to spend some time each week with Tertiary Christopher Smith, priest in charge at S. Andrew's Tower Hill, Kirkby (Z-car country !) where there are twenty thousand inhabitants and an ex-Army hut for a church. Father Antonio, well accustomed to the city from his work in Tokyo, has in his short time at Liverpool penetrated the neighbourhood with a considerable round of prison, hospital, hostel and housing scheme visits. Father Antonio returns to Tokyo for May and June, but we look forward to having him back. Brother Ronald, based in Warrington, continues his factory work in steel, chemicals, biscuits and beer !

The spring and summer are the times for Nash Court where David Stevens runs the Apprentices courses ; he was also recently appointed chairman of the new Church and Community Board of the Diocese, which is a new venture.

Better News

Brother Owen is making a good recovery, and in April made the long journey back to Britain from New Zealand, stopping off with some members of his family in Vancouver for a week before arriving at Heathrow on 11 April. He was most impressed with the Airline's extra thought and care with a wheelchair at every stop to keep the running smooth ! One of the immediate joys on getting home was to

have a bath, and fortunately Brother Simeon, somewhat delayed in his attempts to get to Fiwila, was at hand to attend to this professionally. Plaistow's door and telephone bell hardly stopped as news of Owen's return got round, and provided excellent natural physiotherapy combined with the joys of renewed friendships. Doctor Powell-Evans, his brother, is expected to collect him at the beginning of May, and Brother Owen will be living with him and his wife in North Wales. Their home is happily situated close to Ty'r Brodyr.

Brother Adrian asks us to give great thanks for his good progress after a major operation in January. A month's holiday is fixed in the South of England in May/June, after which Adrian is looking forward to returning once again to El Rancho.

Brother Denis has also enormously improved in health, and some will have received hand written letters from the Dorset County Hospital, where Brother Denis has been since February. The expert and loving care of the hospital staffs such as at the Yeatman and in Dorchester, together with the prayers often repeated bring us to this strong note of thanksgiving to God for these our dear brothers.

Sound of Silence

Glasshampton : After the departure of Brother Frans Eric and Brother Ingmund we missed both the sounds of the Office in Swedish wafting down the corridor one day a week, and the opportunity to join them from time to time in an English version of the Swedish Liturgy.

The garden and grounds have been kept in excellent condition under the inspiration of Brother Arthur. A new rose-bed in the front of the Monastery should be blooming by the time these lines are read ! In addition Brother Arthur has found time to renovate the friars' parlour. The remaining brothers in the noviciate here, Liam, Amos, Marcus and Terry will be completing their stay with us in mid-June.

Brother Neville normally attends the daily eucharist in his wheelchair. He will be having a few weeks away from us in June, being cared for in Kidderminster.

These Guests Are Not Welcome !

Notice is given that the Brothers at Plaistow intend to call in professional help for the relining and replastering of the larder ! The unbrotherly mice presently have free access at many points among the provisions, and are too numerous for Pru the cat and appear to be too well educated to be caught by mouse traps.

The brothers at Plaistow are constantly reminded of the age of the building they live in, and now must face the fact that many of the window frames need replacing. Brother Christian has been getting on with many of the practical jobs still to be done in the House, with the assistance of Julian Foord who is giving us six months of his time before going up to Oxford. 'On the contrary, Julian, *you* are most welcome !'

Community of the King of Love

The Reverend Neil Smith, a member of the Community of the King of Love, spent six months at Hilfield Friary before returning to Derbyshire in March. The Brothers take the opportunity of thanking Neil, through these columns, for all

that he gave to the Friary during his happy stay and wish him well in the early days of the growth of this exciting and ecumenical Community, to which Brother Jonathan has been appointed Visitor for this year.

The Five Parishes Group

The working together of the Parishes of Leigh, Chetnole, Batcombe, Hilfield and Hermitage is working very happily. Each week there is a staff meeting at the Friary with Father Harold Best, and an Eastertide Party was enjoyed by the whole Group last April.

Hard Ground

Sadly the snowy Easter caused several cancellations of groups of young people planning to camp at Hilfield this year. However, a hardy group of boys from the Sixth Form College in Yeovil braved the elements on the Terraces in Holy Week itself. Other visitors from the Schools include the Confirmation candidates from Sherborne and Dauntsey's School. The former visit numbered an all-time record of seventy-five candidates !

C.S.F. Out and About

Sister Mildred is now assisting Kathleen George and her cousin at the S. Alphege Centre in Dover. The Centre is a hostel with accommodation for people in temporary need, and who either because of long housing lists or for some other reason are homeless. Sister Mary Catherine in Birmingham looks forward to other sisters at Wellclose during the summer, and Sisters Jannafer, Alison Mary and Hilary will all be filling gaps there. In the meantime the Sisters at the Convent have been able to help by providing protection pending legal aid for a young woman with a small child. Sisters Angela Mary and Barbara are getting dug-in at Newcastle-under-Lyme and beginning to have a steady flow of guests, retreats and quiet days.

Between Visitors

Guests and visitors are most welcome to share the life in the larger Friaries at Hilfield and Alnmouth, and the summer brings people in added quantities. The Guestmasters are always grateful for those wishing to go and stay to write first to enquire if there is available accommodation. It should be noted that in fact the Hilfield Guesthouse will be closed from 27 July until 23 August, and at Alnmouth the brothers plan to be free from engagements, etc., from 20 October until 2 November.

A Free Daffodil

Brother Wilfrid learnt recently that a recognised method of obtaining daffodils was by buying the right soap powder ! Unfortunately new plans for the Alnmouth gardens do not include the need for soap powder or plastic daffodils—though the Brothers would value any free offers of real daffodil bulbs ! The area on the road side of the drive up to the Friary is being redeveloped and the idea is that hopefully by next spring, there will be a new dash of colour on the hillside—but it must be real !

Summer Camps

The Hilfield Families Camp is once again nearly upon us, and we look forward to this with the aid of Sister Eileen and Sister Lynda Mary over from Compton Durville. Generously at the same time, the Convent is lending Sister Hilary for the Northern Camp at Budle Bay starting on 20 July. Brother Andrew Philip and Brother Samuel join this year's team under Brother Keith's able leadership, and Brother Damian is tagging on. We need a *full* camp to make it financially work, and for £17 for a fortnight it's a bargain. As Brother Keith was once heard to say, 'Ve have vays of making you enjoy it!'. If you are sixteen or over, but look under twenty-five, write to one of the team.

Pilgrims

The Pilgrims of S. Francis (Les Compagnons de S. François) made their Easter Pilgrimage in the parish of Lewknor, Oxfordshire. The pilgrims were from Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire and Cheshire, and led by Brother Colin Wilfred on a 'Walk to Emmaus'. Now plans are in preparation for some forty pilgrims to join the International Pilgrimage in the Eiffel, West Germany, at the end of July, and another forty to make the National Pilgrimage across Mull to Iona at the end of August.

In 1976 the British movement is to be host to the whole movement for the International Pilgrimage. This will be from Norwich to Walsingham and involving about three hundred people from several European countries. Some will be housed in the two centres, but the majority will be divided into the ten walking groups who will take circuitous routes through Norfolk sleeping in different places each night. The organising team will be making several visits to the County during the next twelve months and would welcome help from local people, suggestions about suitable barns, halls or schools. So any offers of help or suggestions should be sent to Kathleen Holford of 140 The Avenue, Aylesford, Maidstone, ME20 7RL.

A Great Honour

Following an invitation from Father Max Mizzi O.F.M.(Conv.), of the Centro Ecumenico Nordico in Assisi, Brother Colin Wilfred joined a large international pilgrimage from Assisi to Rome during Holy Week. The pilgrims who were largely teenagers collected olive branches which were blessed at the Palm Sunday liturgy in the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi, following a pilgrims' route and arriving in Rome for Easter Day. The branches were presented by Brother Colin Wilfred to His Holiness Pope Paul at the offertory during the Easter Mass in S. Peter's Square. This was seen on television in four different countries including Canada and over here in Britain.

New Frontiers

The Third Order breaks new ground as a group of eight Companions in Northern Ireland have asked to become Tertiaries. Also the Dean of Lismore together with his wife recently became novices, and thus become the first members of the Third Order in the Irish Republic.

John and Hazel Judson who live in Warkworth, Northumberland, have become the first U.R.C. members to join the Third Order, and it is delightful that they are the ones in particular to illustrate the new Statutes which permit membership

beyond the Anglican Church, providing the personal approval of the Bishop Protector and the Chapter is first obtained. We indeed welcome all our new brothers and sisters who have recently come into the Third Order.

Brother Reginald writes :

PACIFIC PROVINCE Rodney is now brother-in-charge of the House at Glen Innes. David John has gone from Brookfield to replace William as Vicar of S. Mary's, Glen Innes, and early in March, Hugh Donald (who worked for a year in Saigon before he joined the noviciate) is also going to Auckland. William will be greatly missed in New Zealand. He took a leading part in the joint venture between Anglicans and Methodists which resulted in the formation of a co-operating parish at Glen Innes. It is good that we can maintain our link with the parish and the brothers are hoping to undertake some work beyond it. In spite of many set-backs I believe our work in New Zealand is developing well and with the present team of brothers under Rodney's leadership I have great hope for the future.

Bernard went to Hong Kong just before Easter. He will spend a few months there before going on leave to the U.K. He will be following up the Mission which he conducted in Hong Kong last October. He will be living at a house which has been set apart for prayer and dialogue, assisting the Bishop and clergy in the work of spiritual direction and renewal and getting more thoroughly acquainted with a part of the world where more than once the Society has been able to send brothers to work. His presence there will not commit us to work there indefinitely but of course there is no knowing what doors may be opened. I commend Bernard to your prayers as he spends the next few months at the frontier as it were. Among the achievements of his time as Guardian has been a real strengthening of relations between the brothers and the Diocese of Brisbane (especially through his work with the training of the junior clergy) and with the social workers of the city and many for pastoral and personal reasons will regret his leaving Brookfield.

Francis has been on leave from Zambia and has visited all the Houses in this Province. All good stories get exaggerated even when told by the brothers and I'm not quite sure whether he really landed up at one point of his travels with nothing but the clothes he stood up in and the dictionary of one of the African languages which he is compiling. However, he survived cheerfully as only Francis would, loss of baggage and other hazards of air travel. In December he

conducted a retreat for the brothers in Papua New Guinea. Now he is at Brookfield and we hope he will stay. He brings years of experience as a friar and will be a great support to the new Guardian and to the younger brothers. William too brings strength to the Friary. Although he needs to take things steadily for sometime he is already getting the pottery into production again. He is also going to take over from Bernard the editorship of *SPAN* (our provincial news sheet). As they shared together in the launching of *SPAN* in 1970 there is every assurance that the high standard which Bernard achieved will be maintained. Martyn Francis returned to Brookfield in January. He had spent several months at Koke where he had helped the brothers enormously while Kabay was in hospital. Now he has taken over from David John the work of secretary and bursar of the House.

We no longer speak of our Friary in PNG as 'Jegarata'. The land on which the Friary stands is known as *Haruro* and it is obvious that it means a lot to the people of the district that we should use this name rather than Jegarata which is the nearby village. So we have decided that from now on *Haruro* it shall be. This change, like changes in the liturgy, will take some getting used to ! But that may prove the least of our worries. I'm going to PNG briefly before Easter and will be discussing plans for the future with our brothers there. Suffice it to say that political and economic changes are taking place in that country—independence is now expected in June—and the localisation of leadership in the church is increasing. We believe that our Society is committed to a ministry in PNG but we need to be in a more flexible position if we are to fulfil our vocation there.

Kabay is back in *Haruro*, walking better and less with the aid of his stick. Brian tells me that among other things he has got down to the urgent task of painting and renovating some of the friary buildings. Philip finished his two years as Chaplain of the Melanesian Brotherhood in January. At present he is working with the brothers at Patteson House but he will return to PNG later this year. I hope that Randolph will go from Koke to join the brothers in the Solomons.

The Sisters of the Community of S. Clare are expected to reach Australia in May. We much look forward to their arrival. Brother John Charles has been appointed Warden of the Community in Australia. Please remember them as they establish their life in this Province.

Brother Gerard made his Life Profession in Honiara on Wednesday, 12 March, when Archbishop John received his vows in his Chapel. We look forward later in the year to the Life Profession of Brother Ross and to the Simple Profession of Brother Donald Andrew. Ambrose Motue was clothed as a novice at Haruro on 1 March (he is a Solomon Islander) and we have another postulant, Eric, now living with the brothers there.

Brother Luke writes :

AMERICAN PROVINCE The friars have had quite a bit of sickness lately. Brother Adrian had major surgery for cancer in January. We are pleased to say that he has recovered. Brother Stephen has not been well—he was hospitalized in March. He is home now, but is weak. We ask your prayers for him. Father Joseph holds his own. We are so thankful for the nursing of Sister Ruth C.S.F. and Brother John Edward. Special thanks to Bishop Sherman of Long Island and Bishop Myers of California for their kindness in helping us with the financial side of Father's care.

The Brothers in Trinidad now have their own place. With my permission they have called their house after S. Anthony. The address is 15 Queen Street, S. Joseph, Trinidad. Our thanks to Dean Douglin who housed our friars for about a year. Pray for them as they seek to serve the Lord in the West Indies. In May we hope to welcome the Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago as our guest. He will be attending meetings at the National Church Headquarters in New York City at that time and hopes to visit Little Portion.

Three postulants were received in February and we clothed two novices in March ; slowly, but surely, we are growing. Brother Henry has been acting as Novice Tutor, giving the lectures and seeing to the care of the new friars. He will be attending a conference being held in England at Hilfield Friary, in June, which will be dealing with the care and training of our novices and postulants.

The family of Alpha House has grown. Three new boys arrived on Monday in Holy Week. They are all blood brothers, ages ten, twelve and thirteen. Keep Geoffrey, Gary and Michael in your prayers. Brothers Lawrence and Justus are as proud as can be of their new ' sons '. Of course, Russel and Clyde continue to be the ' old boys ' of the house.

At El Rancho, the Brothers have launched a building campaign. Through grants and gifts they hope to add on to the existing building to provide a proper place for the Brothers to live. By the addition of a common room and four or five small bedrooms for Brothers over the existing garage, the 'friary' will be more suitable to our Franciscan life style, while at the same time being available to serve the people who come to the Ranch.

May God bless you all for your interest, prayers, and support of our life and work for God and his people.

Correspondence

Dear Sir,

Being a magistrate and a member of a prison board I read with sympathy and interest your articles in *THE FRANCISCAN* on the re-habilitation of ex-prisoners.

There is, however, another side of the picture of crime which rarely gets the sympathy or help which it should. I refer to the innocent victims of crime. They suffer loss, often grievous bodily harm, and frequently a traumatic experience which can distort their lives over a long period. Who cares for them?

As magistrates we get a lot of training in the treatment of offenders. I can only remember one lecture when a Detective Superintendent dealt with the victims. Among other cases he described a case of rape on a young girl, and the effects it had on her, her family, and their future. In another case he told of the effects of robbery and gross violence on a poor old lady of seventy.

These sort of crimes are happening all the time. Who helps the victims? Many societies, money and workers are devoted to the criminals who were the cause of this distress.

I read the poem from 'The Magistrate'. I have been in a similar position. It is a harrowing one but one's attention was drawn in the poem towards the perpetrator of a criminal assault. What of the victim? He was knocked down and had his jaw broken with a nailed boot. What fears might he suffer in future as a result of that attack?

I think it is only fair to give both sides of the picture. There is often as much need for help to the victims as the criminals. Help which is all too rarely given.

If you feel, as I do, that this letter should be published I would prefer to remain

J.P.

Christians in Vietnam



A BISHOP of the American Episcopal Church flew into Saigon one day. He went straight to the square outside the President's Palace, and had himself photographed demonstrating against the corruptions of the Government of South Vietnam. The next day he flew back to the U.S.A. Many of the Saigon newspapers featured the photographs, with articles strongly resenting his behaviour. They said, in effect, 'There are many things wrong with the way we run our country, we know, but we ourselves will do the protesting about them. We don't want foreigners who know nothing of our way of life insulting the whole people of Vietnam by decrying the government we have elected'. So much of what is said about Vietnam is like what that bishop did : well-intentioned, but without having stopped to listen to what a representative cross-section of the people of Vietnam themselves think. He did not even stay to consult the people of Saint Christopher's Church, Saigon, the only church in the whole of Vietnam to represent his denomination there. Although we were ministering principally to the English-speaking population, we had many contacts with Vietnamese Christians and others.

The people of Vietnam were grateful for the service given to their country by many Christians from overseas. A group of American protestant denominations co-operated in the work of Vietnam Christian Service, in which young volunteers worked in remote and often dangerous towns and villages in refugee relief, medical work, and social development. Many of them were pacifists who chose to do this work as an alternative to military service, and quite a few laid down their lives for their Vietnamese friends. Asian Christian Service is a similar organisation sponsored by the churches of the East Asian Christian Conference, and I used to visit regularly the teams of Indian, Japanese, Indonesian and other Asian doctors, nurses, and teachers working in refugee camps and villages up and down the country ; I spent more than one night with them with shells whistling overhead. The British Government sent a team of doctors and nurses to work in the Saigon children's hospital, and there were teams of Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders in other hospitals. The Save the Children Fund ran a convalescent home for children who had been discharged from other hospitals, and was perhaps more successful than any other in training

Vietnamese staff, so that, when the relief workers left, there would still be some able to carry on their high standards of caring.

It should be stressed that many of those treated by these medical teams were injured in domestic and road accidents ; there were some of course who had stepped on land-mines or had had their houses demolished by Vietcong rockets, but one organisation which came specifically to treat children who had been burned by napalm had still been unable to find one patient after a year's searching. A small but concerned band of young British volunteers work for Project Vietnam Orphans, for with the break-up of the traditional close-knit Confucian family structure when most of the men left home to fight for their country, the orphanages in Vietnam are bulging with hundreds of children, abandoned by mothers who cannot afford to feed them. In one orphanage I knew, the staff were so overworked that there was a twenty per cent mortality rate among the babies abandoned there. But after communist propaganda accusations that South Vietnam was selling its children, the government made it as difficult as possible for Vietnamese orphans to be adopted overseas, and an Australian working for a Swiss organisation, *Terre des Hommes*, is about the only person to have much success in completing the necessary paperwork for adoptions. ' Foster Parents Plan ', in spite of its name, does not arrange adoptions, but links sponsors in Britain or America, who promise a regular sum, with a Vietnamese family who can be helped with, say, the cost of the children's schooling. They also translate and forward letters between sponsors and those they help. Saint Christopher's Church still gives a large proportion of its collections to a scheme run by Foster Parents Plan to help with the housing of needy families. Finally, to balance the many criticisms levelled against them, we should remember that American christians serving in the armed forces in Vietnam regularly helped neighbouring villages and orphanages, and that the American Government employed hundreds of Americans to help and advise with the use of new and better strains and techniques in raising rice or pork ; with road and drainage schemes ; and with what must surely have been the most socialist land reform programme ever sponsored by a capitalist society, whereby every peasant was given title deeds to own the land he was tilling, even if he had previously been renting it.

All this service given by Christians in Vietnam was better understood by the Vietnamese than by the world at large. The first war to be

followed on television was probably also the one most misleadingly reported. Many of the correspondents I met thought that the old ideal of objective reporting of facts was out-dated, and their aim was to be 'committed', which meant they formed their opinions before they came to Vietnam and then looked for facts to support their arguments. The World Council of Churches employed a representative in Saigon who took two American congressmen to Con Son prison island, where they secretly took photographs and were well paid by 'Life' magazine for a description of the 'Tiger cages' in which the prisoners were kept. Their accusations were immediately answered with photographs taken in a good light, showing that what they described were not pits in the ground at all, but comfortable rooms viewed from an overhead observation gallery; but the truth never received the same publicity as the original accusations. So although the Vietnamese put up a monument to the help they received from other nations, it is not surprising that they felt they were being crucified by the press in so-called Christian countries.

The Americans' motives for becoming involved in Vietnam were mixed. But the aim of enabling the people of South Vietnam to defend themselves against aggression from the North was clearly achieved soon after the Tet offensive of 1968 was crushed. So my successor as priest in charge, an Australian, wrote recently, 'I think it is no exaggeration to say that the withdrawal of the American military presence was a very good thing. It has taken some time, but slowly the authorities seem to be coming to grips with the fact that it is their country after all. Certainly in Saigon, all sorts of small improvements have been made in recent months—the removal of most of the barbed-wire, painting of lines on the roads and so on. Small, yes, but precious and encouraging in a city geared to war for so long'. But he describes the cease fire as 'best summed up as neither war nor peace, so far as I can see. The fighting continued, as we all know, but there is no doubt that the pace has slackened over the months since then. But it has never totally stopped; one must keep reminding oneself in secure Saigon, that the fighting is going on in the provinces, often not so far away'. In those circumstances it is easy to imagine the difficulties experienced by Christians trying to continue relief work to the needy, and the reconstruction of a shattered economy, at a time when the rest of the world seems, with a sigh of relief, to have washed its hands of any continuing interest in Vietnam.

It is hard even now to know what is the position of Christians in North Vietnam. For a foreigner to get into Hanoi he needs normally to be either a communist or a fellow-traveller, and must not be able to speak Vietnamese. Most of the North Vietnamese Christians fled to the South when the country was divided, and many of those who remained must have been slaughtered in the massive purges which were considered an essential part of setting up a communist society. One occasionally receives reports of small groups continuing to worship, and one Christmas a few years ago foreign diplomats were invited to attend midnight mass in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Hanoi, although they could hardly see anything for the lights of the television cameras filming the 'freedom of religion' in the North, nor hear anything for the loudspeakers of the party rally which had been simultaneously arranged in the square outside, and which every loyal citizen was expected to attend !

The Vietnamese Protestant Church was founded by the work of the Christian Missionary Alliance, an interdenominational body which originally had Anglican participation, but which has gradually become a fundamentalist American denomination. At one stage a group of young pastors formed a break-away church because they wished to become more involved in social action, whereas the fundamentalist leaders considered they should be concerned only with evangelism. But now the main body is becoming much more indigenous and free of missionary influence, and in many places they too have been active in the relief of need among their fellow-Vietnamese of all religions. This has often been due to contacts with Vietnam Christian Service, Asian Christian Service, and other groups of overseas Christians. The Vietnamese Protestant Church has started an ambitious programme of evangelistic meetings all over the country, and is optimistic that the war has left the Vietnamese people more aware of their religious needs. We should not forget also the impressive achievements of protestant missions and the Wyclif Bible Translators among the 'montagnard' tribesmen.

Twenty per cent of the population of South Vietnam is Roman Catholic. Many of them fled from North Vietnam when the communists took over there. One Roman Catholic lady complained to me, 'I know that I am on the Vietcong's list of people to be assassinated, for a number of reasons. First, I am a North Vietnamese, and secondly, a catholic. Third, my husband has been drafted into the South

Vietnamese army. Fourthly, the communists always assassinate the more intelligent Vietnamese : an average of one village chief each night was stealthily killed last year, and many of my schoolfriends were among the three thousand they killed when they invaded Hue. As a Christian I don't mind dying, but so that my children should not be left orphans if the communists take over South Vietnam too, please help me to leave the country'. I could not help her, for the Vietnamese Government does not want to lose its most useful citizens. But it is hardly surprising that the Roman Catholics are among those most strongly opposed to the present arrangements, whereby the communists, from whom they fled in North Vietnam, have been officially allowed to occupy large parts of South Vietnam too. As well as holding a very high proportion of the leading positions in the country, the Vietnamese Roman Catholics are highly respected because when the country was thrown into chaos in 1968, Catholic Relief Services, with its network of contacts with parish priests throughout the country, was the only welfare organisation able to distribute relief supplies quickly to those who had been left homeless.

Both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians in Vietnam suffered in the past through being identified with foreign powers : the Roman Catholics with the French, and the Protestants with the Americans. But there is now a good chance that they will each be able to identify themselves more closely with their own people in the period of recovery, and may strengthen their own life, make converts, and influence their neighbours and national policies. Whether this will result in closer relations between them remains to be seen.

What is certain, however, is that there will be closer contacts between Christians and the eighty per cent of the population of South Vietnam who are Buddhist. Following the example of the Christians, and contrary to their own world-renouncing traditions, Vietnamese Buddhists have founded many orphanages, clinics, and other relief organisations, and are concerned in all aspects of national redevelopment. As Christians share with them in this work, Vietnam is likely to be a place where understanding between Christians and Buddhists will be very close, because of practical co-operation.

MICHAEL COUNSELL.

(The Very Reverend Michael Counsell, now Dean of Seychelles, was from 1968—1971 priest in charge of The Mekong Missionary District, Vietnam and Cambodia).

The Impact of Christianity upon the Iban Dayaks of Borneo



FIRST, a definition : The term 'Dayak' is applied to two different groups of the indigenous peoples of Borneo ; the mis-called 'Sea Dayaks' (I say mis-called because that was the name given to them in the days of the first Rajah Brooke when they were marauding

pirates living in longhouses on the rivers near the sea—the term no longer applies) and the equally mis-called 'Land Dayaks', because *all* Dayaks are farmers, rice and pepper planters, so all equally 'Land Dayaks'.

The so-called 'Sea Dayaks' consist of the Ibans with the Iban-speaking Sebuyaus and the Salakaus, speaking a different but similar language. The 'Land Dayaks' consist of the Biatah, Bukah and Jagoi, each with their own language. They are a much milder people than the Ibans, who were the dreaded head-hunters of the days of the first two Rajahs.

So by temperament the 'Land Dayaks' (I continue to use the term for convenience) are a more religious people than the Ibans, who are certainly not a religious people. That is not to say that they have not a religion—they have a whole pantheon of gods, of whom the younger people know nothing except their names, but about whom the older people have endless stories handed down by word of mouth for generations, and of human heroes who journeyed to visit them in Sabayan, the Underworld—a word that we Christians still use to denote the place of the departed ; in the Apostles' Creed we say that Our Lord 'nurun ka Sabayan' (descended into Sabayan). We also use the Iban word 'petara' for gods in general, but 'Allah' for God Himself—thus we say in the Nicene Creed that we believe in 'Allah . . . ti Petara siko aja' (Allah, who is the only God).

But if these petara are remote the spirits—spiteful and malevolent—are always near at hand, and the Iban religion is mainly a propitiation of these spirits. The Ibans have no temples, but you will find in the jungle offering-tables on which are offered food for the spirits, with perhaps a trio or quartet of small wooden idols at the base.

Public worship—if it can be so called—is confined to certain 'gawai' (feasts) such as at the end of harvest, when the old Manang (witch-doctor or medicine-man) will parade up and down the long communal

hall of the longhouse accompanied by girls in traditional Dayak costume (otherwise rarely seen now), while the 'congregation' sits cross-legged against the walls, where they will be 'blessed' by having a cock waved over them.

To the old people this may mean a lot—it is their religion. But to most of the younger ones it is meaningless, and even the middle-aged are losing their faith in it. So over and over again a father will come to me to say that he wants his children to be Christians—though he himself will not make the break. And of course older boys and young men returning from secondary school or Mission boarding houses, or work in the Army or Police or in the great Shell Company, having had contact with the outside world will bring back new ideas. So when I visit a longhouse that is still completely pagan I do not find it difficult to make friends; they are a very hospitable people and gifts of medicine or dressings for wounds soon break the ice. I always have one or two Christian Dayaks with me, and I always celebrate the Mass in the morning before I depart—in the communal hall if there is no objection. The pagans will watch, and after a few visits will ask what it is all about. And then comes the request 'Father, aku deka anak aku masok Kristian' ('I wish my son to be a Christian'). It is not long before there is a small Christian nucleus, helped perhaps by boys from a Mission boarding school on holiday. Then the young men and girls will start to take an interest—and then the older people. This may mean a year's work, but at the end of that time possibly a third or even a half of the longhouse will be on the way to becoming Christian.

Quite apart from personal contacts in this way I now frequently have parties of people—deputations of perhaps five men—coming to my house to say that the people in their longhouse or kampong (Dayak jungle village) want to be Christians—and in several cases I have admitted between fifty and seventy Hearers on my first visit to that longhouse or kampong. Then sometimes (as at Tabong recently in my present parish) they will off their own bat build themselves a small chapel. And in one case, at Meta in Miri parish, which I was visiting at the invitation of the parish priest who though fluent in Chinese spoke no Iban, they had actually built themselves a chapel before asking the priest to come to instruct them.

In my present parish I have thirty-five such Christian villages, which I have to visit with the sole assistance of a full-time Catechist whose job it is to instruct the catechumens—for initiation is a four-stage process,

Hearer, Catechumen, then after a year's instruction Baptism, and as soon as possible after that Confirmation. My business is to celebrate the Mass and baptize the children of Christians (adults are baptized in one of the larger Chapels on some great Feast), and to solemnize marriages, which can take place in any place where Mass is wont to be celebrated. Frequently these are mass weddings—three, five or on one occasion eleven couples at one go for this parish was seven years without a resident priest.

But I have said that the Ibans are not religious—they look upon religious services as something to be conducted by the priest or catechist. Most villages have a lay reader, but few of them conduct regular Sunday services—though they perform a useful and essential service in that they conduct the Burial Service for the Christian dead (you can imagine what a help that is in a parish this size). And very few families have morning or evening prayers in their own houses, though we try to teach them to do so. They still think that 'praying is the priest's job'. At the same time, Christianity *is* spreading, the Diocese now has many Dayak priests and students in training, and our Bishop himself is an Iban (and even if I am not an Iban I am at least a fellow-Malaysian ; having lived in Malaysia for nearly thirty-five years I am now a citizen).

With regard to relations to other religious bodies, we are on the friendliest relations with the Roman Catholic Church but have to combat opposition from the Seventh Day Adventists and the Bahai—the former using free medicine and free transport to Kuching in their aeroplane as bribes to get people to join their particular heresy. But of course the main obstacle is Islam. When I first came to Sarawak there was the friendliest relations between the Christians and the Muslim Malays ; the Tuan Imam of the local mosque was a friend of mine and always invited me to their great feast at the end of the fasting-month. It was a help that we used the same religious terms—we in the Christian Church use the Arabic 'Allah' for God, 'Isa Almesih' for Jesus Christ and 'Roh Alkudus' for the Holy Spirit. So Malay boys seeing me on the way to Church would say 'You also going to pray?'. On one occasion a senior Government officer who was a pious Muslim—in fact a Haji—in making arrangements for the opening of a new water-supply system decided that this must start with a Service of Blessing. And *what* a service that was ! He invited the leaders of all the four religious groups to take part in turn. First the Muslims (and very beautiful this

was I am told though we had not yet arrived), then the Chinese with much banging of gongs and firing of crackers, then the pagan Dayaks, and finally the Christians—the reason that we were last was because being a Sunday I had a five-mile down-river journey after our parish Mass. And when we got there (I had a choir of Scouts and Guides with me) there was a congregation of about five hundred sitting on the banks by the new reservoir to listen to our service as they had to the other three. But I must admit that a lot of their enthusiasm was due to the fact that they had all been promised a free chicken curry lunch (cooked by our Scouts at the request of the Haji) after it was all over.

But alas that friendly spirit no longer prevails. Islam has been declared the official religion of all Malaysia, including Sarawak, although only about two-fifths of the population is Muslim. The Malays are still friendly—but there is fierce propaganda to get non-Muslims (Christians and Chinese) to become Muslim—propaganda backed up by bribes ; promotion, better schooling for children of converts, a bigger shop for a small merchant, more land for farmers—and the weaker respond. There is intense Government propaganda, new Mosques built by Government funds, University scholarships for Malays or converts, and in all ways the non-Muslims are felt to be an inferior people. There has been definite persecution in Sabah but so far under a wiser Government none such here. But Christians in Sarawak have to face up to the possibility—I can only hope and pray that the Ibans, having given up their old religion because they found that Christianity is something better, will not now be willing to give that up, but will stay steadfast. For three hundred years the Christian Church had to stand up to the persecution of the Roman Empire—doubtless it will survive this onslaught also.

S. MARY'S CHURCH, ABOK, SARAWAK.

ERIC H. SCOTT.

Justice

Love of justice in most men is no more than the fear of suffering injustice.

DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD 1613—1680.

The Prospects for Christianity in Japan



THERE has always been a sense of remoteness and mystery about the 'Far East' as far as Europeans are concerned. The reports of the few adventurers who managed to survive the rigours of the long, hazardous journey, and the strange exotic merchandise they brought back, still capture our imagination. It is interesting to contemplate that many of the countries of Asia had never felt the need to open their frontiers to foreign influences, finding in their own civilisations all they considered necessary for a full and satisfactory way of life. The foreigner has almost invariably been regarded with suspicion when he has intruded. As you will soon see, my own entry to Japan was definitely in the role of an intruder !

The history of Christianity in Japan is inevitably bound up with the intrusion of European and North American influences into Asia and the Pacific. The great pioneer Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier, arrived in Japan in 1549, in the train of European merchant-adventurers. The warm reception given to Christianity during the initial period of its life in Japan is more than likely due to the fact that the country was torn by rival clans struggling for supremacy. The most powerful war-lord was interested in the commodities carried in the ships which brought the missionaries—especially the muskets. The Christian missionaries themselves might be useful in countering the increasing influence of militant Buddhist monks who had sided with some of his bitter enemies. This honeymoon period ended when a new war-lord succeeded to power and came out with an edict against Christianity. Gradually the concern that political conquests seemed to follow the coming of European missionaries to other parts of Asia led to the sealing-off of the Japanese islands against all foreign commerce and intercourse, and the establishment of a policy of isolation which lasted for two hundred and fifty years.

The history of modern Japan begins in 1853 with the breaking of the deliberate policy of enforced isolation from the rest of the world. A small force of American gun-boats arrived not far from Tokyo and requested the rulers to open Japan's doors.

In 1945 Japan was once more compelled to open her doors—again under American pressure.

Not unnaturally the Christian movement in Japan has been considerably influenced by great numbers of missionaries from North America. The American role in the Far East has continued to be significant, especially in Japan, ever since her doors were opened to the western world in 1853, and during the crucial periods in modern Japanese history such as the Meiji Restoration (which established a central government under the Emperor in 1868), the post World War II occupation, and the continuing United States political, military, economic and cultural presence. The Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur, within weeks of his landing in Japan to receive its surrender, challenged the American Churches to send '1,000 missionaries', and to 'place the Bible at the disposal of the Japanese people'. Another century of Christian mission in Japan had begun.

I was carried along on the current of history in the wake of General MacArthur to Tokyo. As a member of a small British liaison team attached to his headquarters, I had a wonderful opportunity of seeing much of Japan and many of its people, still reeling from the shock of war and from the apprehension created by surrender to an alien military power. Not long after shedding army uniform, I was back in Japan, at the invitation of Japanese church leaders, to whom I offered my services in any way they saw fit. Until 1970 my family and I lived and blossomed in Japan. It has been one of the most critical periods of development in the history of the nation, and for me, a wonderful experience to be involved in the maturing of a Christian Church in Japan which will help Japan find her soul. Not the least interesting aspect of my service in Japan has been the way in which my status as 'missionary' changed. (I dislike the word in the context in which it is usually used, and the historical image that still persists). I bore the discomfort of being regarded as the reincarnation of a typical pre-war missionary for a time. However it was a rare delight to be invited by a Japanese bishop to come to another part of Japan to be priest-in-charge of a congregation, whose Japanese pastor had just died, after a ministry of fifty years. I was licensed and 'instituted' as one of the diocesan clergy, swearing canonical obedience to my father-in-God (who happened to be a Japanese !). From that time I found myself more involved as a fellow-worker, in the varied affairs of parish, diocese and province. It was a great joy to be appointed by the General Synod to be one of its representatives on several conferences and consultations

both within Japan and in East Asia, covering Mission in Unity, Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence and the Council of the Church in East Asia. My title, conferred by General Synod, was 'consultant', which meant being present, and listening most of the time. That is the excuse for this personal paragraph. Most of what I will be writing will be the opinions and criticisms of Japanese colleagues, and others, which I hope reflect the image of Christianity, and of Christians, through Asian eyes.

The history of Christianity in Japan immediately raises some questions about the response of the Japanese people to the Gospel. The one which is constantly being asked is this : why do less than one per cent of the Japanese call themselves Christian, considering the efforts of thousands of dedicated Christian missionaries ? Another question, closely related, is : why has not Christianity made any spectacular advance like the numerous indigenous religious movements in Japan ?

Without attempting to answer these questions directly, it may be interesting to comment on some of the criticisms made by a number of non-Christian Japanese, all of whom are outstanding scholars in various fields. These were collected during a survey relating to the future prospects of Christianity in Japan carried out by a member of the staff of one of the universities founded by the Episcopal Church, and with whose Department of Christian Education I have had many happy relationships.

'Christians are not natural'

It appears to the outsider that many Christians do not marry. A Roman Catholic Priest told me once that there was a reluctance on the part of young Japanese men to offer for the priesthood as celibacy is 'not natural'. This is one reason why the Roman Catholic Church is still largely ministered to by non-indigenous priests. Other Christians do not smoke or drink. One of the text books I used in learning 'Japanese for missionaries' contains sentences condemning the use of tobacco and alcohol. Japanese Shinto and Buddhist thought give the impression that what is natural is essentially good, and that includes human nature. Yukio Mishima, perhaps the best known modern author, whose books are available in English wrote 'Christianity should leave Japan alone. We Japanese are close to nature and we love its freedom. Christianity is unnatural and would take freedom away'.

Surely there is a basic truth in this concept of nature. Here is a point of meeting which Christians can use as stepping stones toward a theology of the natural and the spiritual, capturing Japanese traditional insights and integrating them with Christian thought on Man's original nature—'made in the image of God'.

Christians are too self-conscious

This criticism implies that both Christians, and the doctrine they live by are 'exclusive'. It implies a lack of human warmth, and a pre-occupation with orthodoxy, ethical conformity, and the cult. Perhaps it might be appropriate to mention an important phenomenon of Christianity in Japan, the Mukyokai, or Non-Church-ism, as this has been regarded as a Japanese corrective to what, the critics feel, are Christian shortcomings. Emil Brunner saw in Non-Church-ism a 'movement that is most promising for the future and for all Christianity'. Its principles can be expressed briefly as emphasising Bible as against Church, individual as against organisation, personal freedom as against institutional authority, the word as against the sacraments, and the laity as against a hierarchy. This should help us to see the importance of presenting a better image of the church that the multiplicity of denominations and sects, with credal differences and emphases, make meaningless, or, at least, unattractive to an outsider.

Christianity is foreign

This is probably the oldest, and, to the missionary, the most frustrating criticism still being repeated. To most Japanese, Christianity is 'western', which usually means 'American'. I have never felt that I have made much impact by saying that the founder of Christianity was born in Asia. Christian missionaries arrived with the other foreigners who brought their sciences and techniques, which have brought about the modernisation of Japan. To that extent Christianity could be regarded as a part of the imported 'western' culture. It is not always recognised, even in our own so-called 'Western civilisation', that Christianity is the foundation stone. It is more often seen as an appendage, and that is how the brand of Christianity we have exported is often seen. The association of Christianity with the western way of life still persists, it is dressed in European clothes. However it is good to hear voices in Japan which can criticise Christianity for its inability to speak in a language directly comprehensible to the ordinary man or woman,

and only partly understood by a few intellectuals, and then the same voices go on to say that Christianity should not be abandoned because of its uniqueness ! Rinzo Shiina, a notable Protestant convert from communism writes, ' The foreignness of Christianity to the Japanese people is related to the basic foreignness of Christ to every man. I firmly believe that, from the encounter of Christianity with Japan, words and deeds will spring forth which can appeal to our people and which will be thoroughly Japanese '.

There is a fallacy to which missionaries are sometimes victims, that ' western science ' and ' western culture ' are practically identical with Christian values. Somehow the new Japan, which has emerged so rapidly and remarkably, has given missionaries the impression that Christianity has played its part in the development of democracy and modernisation in the western pattern. It came as a shock to me to hear an eminent American church leader who came to Japan at the invitation of General MacArthur pronounce to a gathering of Japanese and foreign Christian leaders that our task was to set before the people of Japan the alternatives of a happy Christian capitalist democracy—or a ruthless dictatorial communist state. Many Japanese have discovered that there is a difference between ' westernisation ' and ' Christianisation ', and there has been much criticism of Christianity's contribution. This has had beneficial effects, as many Japanese Christian leaders today have a clearer perception of what missionary motivation should be, and a road is being opened for Japan's acceptance of Christianity on its own unique merits.

Not long before I left Japan I was present at the first truly ecumenical Consultation of Christian denominations in Japan, and overseas Churches and ecumenical agencies co-operating in mission in Japan. From the notes I obtained at the time, I would like to share with you the substance of the final summing-up by Masahisa Suzuki, as it is the authentic prophetic voice of the Church in Japan.

' Mission begins with *Hope* based on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus the world we are concerned with becomes larger, and we must bear our Cross in this larger area. We may be inclined to be pessimistic because we are only one per cent of the population ; but this is not good thinking. If we are concerned about statistics we focus on ourselves and forget our responsibility to the world. We must have a wide field of mission.

‘The Bible tells us that Mission is more than evangelism. It is also *reconciliation*. Peter preached to the Gentiles and reconciled them with the Jews who were in conflict with them. The wall that divided them was broken down. We have many dividing walls in Japan, and in our relations with neighbouring countries. We must break down these walls. It is for this reason that I have had more interest in Martin Luther King than in Billy Graham—Martin Luther King was breaking down walls—he was a reconciler.

‘Mission is movement—it is like an escalator going up and up. It goes on moving up intent on reaching to God. If it stops it falls into institutionalism or sectarianism. John Wesley told how he dreamt that he went to heaven and saw no denominations there, but then he went to hell and found them all there ! Some denominations may take us to heaven—but only if they are moving in Mission. If a denomination doesn’t move it becomes self-satisfied and has no meaning. Our responsibility is to love God and to love and serve our fellow men. If we do this the escalator will not stop and we will be engaged in Mission.

‘We may not be able to change our present structures easily without having a dialogue about our various church doctrines. We can agree to do our utmost to co-operate in Mission together.

‘The Churches in Japan have one thing in common—they are all small, with few believers. There are three main causes for this. First of all there are many competing religions, and so the people of our country ask us why they should be Christian. We can take heart from the way in which Barth’s theology is popular reading in Japan, making the Christian faith clearer to many. Then there is still ill-feeling in Japan towards Christianity. Christian countries have been linked with colonialism—the Vietnam war has intensified this ill-feeling and so many people are sceptical about Christianity. A truly Japanese Church is extremely important. Men like Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King have had greater influence in Japan by their witness than the sending of one hundred ordinary missionaries. If overseas churches want to help us in Mission one sure way is to make a big impact through the church in their own countries in Civil Rights, Peace and other important matters.

‘Secularisation has advanced. This is a world-wide problem. We can live happily without religion, according to the intellectuals. Many admit they have no religion. It is necessary for us to have a Healthy

Christianity, not a Christianity only for the suffering. We must have a Christianity of Truth, a Christianity which can help the healthy, intelligent person come to know why he must possess a faith in Christ. In other words, we need to supply the water of life to the healthy whose throats are thirsty'.

BIRMINGHAM.

DAVID CHAMBERLAIN.

The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life

JESUS went to the Father by the way of the cross. That is the model for the serious business of Christian prayer. Contemplation is necessary in a world of action, as ours is today. It is not a sideshow to a busy life, but more and more essential as life becomes more active. It is essential for the balance of personality and for maintaining sanity and a sense of direction, for the only true sense of direction in the midst of the maelstrom, the direction to God. For in serious prayer we are setting out on the way to the Father. The object can be expressed as union with God. But that can be misleading, if taken to mean a continuing state of spiritual awareness somehow different from normal human consciousness. But if we think of it as direction towards God, it brings in the total drive of our lives. Living is always movement. We pass through time, and never go backwards and never stand still. Prayer is part of this going through life, integrating all parts of our life, our individual thinking, our personal relationships, our various activities, and our hopes for the world, not to mention our fears, in a drive towards God. We need to think clearly how to set about it, because there is a great deal of interest in ways of prayer today, but also a great deal of confusion about it. Traditional eastern approaches make a big appeal to many who feel that the church has failed at this point. Yet we ought to be aware of the tremendous contribution which the Christian tradition of prayer has made, and can still make, before we turn to other forms.

According to the Christian tradition there are three ways in the spiritual life, the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way and the Unitive Way. But these must not be thought of as alternative routes. They are rather three divisions of a single journey. But they are not even

necessarily successive, for they may be simultaneous to some extent, and to pass from one to the next is not necessarily to discard the previous one altogether.

The Purgative Way

To gain the proper perspective, we cannot do better than take Jesus himself as the model. He went to the Father by the way of the cross. That is the clue. If we would set out on the serious business of prayer, we must accept from the start that it is a setting out on the way of the cross. We shall then be prepared to undertake a practical method and a definite discipline. The indispensable discipline is to make the time for prayer and to persevere in it, whether you find it satisfying or not. The importance of this cannot be emphasized too strongly.

The method to begin with is that of simple meditation, thinking about a passage from scripture or a mystery of the faith or a desirable virtue, and this is done during the allotted span of your prayer time. All the experts tell us that such a simple, thinking-out kind of meditation should lead up to a resolution. This should be a practical lesson which you can take away—what S. Francis de Sales calls a spiritual nosegay—a thought to return to during the day, a truth that quickens the emotions and pleases the spiritual sense, and invigorates the desire to live up to your Christian calling.

Such a method is necessary when you first take up the practice of prayer seriously, for otherwise you don't know what to do with the time and feel all at sea. But for many people this very soon begins to be unsatisfactory. To be thinking things out stands in the way of just loving Jesus, and the idea of the resolution, which is supposed to leave you with the will directed towards him, cannot be left until the end of the meditation, but is there from the beginning. So simple meditation may soon be replaced by the prayer of loving attention or simple regard.

During this time of the Purgative Way the mind is very active, and it may seem as if you are doing all the work, and God is doing nothing. But in fact he is training you through the sanctification of your thoughts, so that you may accept the cross, see the value of it, and give yourself to walk along the road of sacrifice. Jesus went to the Father by way of the cross, and very soon you find you are alongside him and have a feeling of fellowship with him. Prayer under these conditions is a partnership with Jesus. It has its own secret joy. One may well ask

why it should be called the Purgative Way, which sounds as if something pretty drastic is happening. But that is just the paradox of it. For while the soul is busily working on its loving activity, what God is doing in the soul is best described as a purgation. He is purging the soul of all that hinders growth in the spiritual life. That is why this state of prayer can truly be called, and can be seen and felt to be, a time of progress. For the affections are weaned away from lesser motives and anchored in the will to love and serve God.

The Illuminative Way

If there is a paradox in the Purgative Way, it is even more the case when we pass to the Illuminative Way. Here we pass from what has seemed to be light into darkness, and the illumination is of such a special kind that it cannot be said to remove the darkness or turn it into light. Rather what happens is that what is felt to be darkness is in the end recognised to be light, and so the paradox remains.

Once more we must think of a method and a discipline on the one hand and what God is doing in the soul on the other. The method is not very different from the prayer of loving attention, which most of us can reach once we have embarked on the Purgative Way. But there comes a point when the ease and sweetness go out of it, and we can only hold on by sheer determination. We are a prey to distracting thoughts and a sense of complete uselessness and confusion. You can see how important the discipline is in these circumstances, which is steadfast loyalty to your rule of keeping your time of prayer, because there is a tremendous temptation to let it go altogether when it seems so useless. The discipline of a rule is essential for the Illuminative Way, and most of us are in the darkness of this state of prayer for a very long time, sometimes for many years.

The method to be employed during this time must vary according to individual needs, but basically it is a matter of keeping the loving attention to God in spite of all the difficulties. Some people find it helpful to use affective prayer, that is the gentle repetition in the mind of a loving phrase which expresses our aim. But the important thing is to bring the mind back to God, whenever we catch it straying, with renewed acts of good will towards him.

Here it is very important to avoid misunderstanding. It has been pointed out that this sounds very much like relying on sheer will power, which is exactly what our friends of the eastern religions say should

not be done, for their methods are above all methods of relaxing. This is right, for any unnatural straining only leads to disaster. The acts of the will which characterize this time are better described as acts of good will, gentle expressions of a quiet and steady resolve, which goes with acceptance of the darkness. For, as we shall see in a moment, it is as the nothingness is lovingly embraced that the gleams of the Illuminative Way appear.

What we must accept is that the sense of frustration of this time is not only normal, but it is also essential for real progress. We are still going with Jesus along the way of the cross, and, as in the Purgative Way, the will is being strengthened for the service of God. But God is also doing something else. He is stripping off all falseness in our apprehension of his presence. As soon as we think that we can feel his presence, the feeling is taken away. At the same time there is growth in self-understanding, for to be stripped of false pretensions is to discover the truth about oneself. The nothingness of this Way is thus not just negative, but an opening to reality, even though reality still remains the gaping void that nothing is there. Because it is reality about God and reality about ourselves, it is a basis for faith. For, in spite of all the darkness and the nothingness, you do go on loving God. The loving does not stop. And it is at this point, when the nothingness is embraced openly, willingly and wholeheartedly, that the first gleams of illumination appear. The darkness itself is mysteriously discovered to be light. And all the time we go about our normal lives and our normal jobs. Nothing is changed except one thing, a thing of immense value for our world : that we know that there is hope for the world, because in the darkness itself there is unquenchable light.

The Unitive Way

The gleams of light which we have considered are the first adumbrations of the Unitive Way. Having decided that the darkness is good, and that we want no experience unless it is authentic and real, we are content to leave ourselves entirely in God's hands. With Jesus on the cross, the cry of dereliction is replaced by the complete surrender : ' Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit '. The gleams of light are the moments of deep assurance that, as Mother Julian of Norwich says, ' All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well '. And then, according to the masters of the spiritual life, the soul may find itself ravished in an ecstasy of the love of God, and the Unitive Way is reached.

But it is just here that the danger lies. For one thing, such an ecstasy is quite common at a very early stage in the spiritual life, long before the Unitive Way is reached. This may be a kind of call vision, like Isaiah in the temple when the cherubim cried the thrice-holy hymn, or like Nicholas Ferrar long before he took up his family religious life at Little Gidding. Most spiritual directors have met people today who have had such an experience. It seems like an anticipation of the Unitive Way, but it may never be repeated, and certainly should never be sought. It is for God to give, if he so wills. But then, again, it is doubtful if an ecstasy of this kind should be regarded as the true characteristic of the Unitive Way, even though the great practitioners of prayers, S. Teresa and S. John of the Cross, certainly seem to have experienced it.

To me, and perhaps to others of a plain and practical turn of mind, the Unitive Way is best expressed, not in terms of ravishing experiences, but in terms of a quiet and peaceful union of wills between the soul and God. The Unitive Way can be expressed in terms of assurance. God and the soul are sure of each other. It is the experience of Jesus at Gethsemane. The discipline of prayer remains the same, that guaranteed allocation of time. The method becomes more flexible, and one may do various things during the time of prayer. But there is a still point deeper down, which is fixed on God and never moves. This is, quite simply, fact. For the most important thing about the Unitive Way is that it is utterly free from self-deception. That is why it has to follow the scouring discipline of the long darkness of the Illuminative Way, and that is why there is no such thing as instant contemplation as far as the Unitive Way is concerned. Only when you know yourself absolutely, and still find yourself loving God, can you claim to have reached this state. And then you don't claim it ; you just know it. And you never talk about it. But there is in fact a secret bond between you and others who have reached this point ; the fact that both you and they have a common understanding. And of course that bond is greatest with Jesus himself. You and he understand each other so well.

Finally, in this union of wills there is peace. It is not an escape from the world with its trouble and tribulation, but peace in the midst of it all, peace within yourself and peace with God. Jesus said : ' I have told you all this that in me you may find peace. In the world you will have trouble. But courage ! The victory is mine ; I have conquered the world '.

BARNABAS S.S.F.

Saint Francis and Nature

A FASCINATING, if over-popularized, aspect of Saint Francis' personality was his extreme sensitivity to the natural world, animate and inanimate, cosmic and microcosmic. In these times of renewed awareness of man's place in the natural scheme of things, S. Francis stands as a remarkable precursor of the ecologist and conservationist—a precursor with the essential spiritual understanding that is so lacking today.

No doubt his love of nature was always a part of S. Francis' personality, but there are no certain references to it in his youth. It is only when he literally shed his inheritance and embraced the poverty of perfection taught by Christ that his spiritual life opened to the natural world. One of his favourite sayings ; ' Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head ' (Mt. 8 : 20) shows this newfound affinity. Like the animals, S. Francis and his first followers lived close to nature in the beautiful Umbrian countryside, possessing nothing and desiring nothing except perfection in God.

In a very real way, S. Francis' love of God had spilled over into nature. He saw Christ not only in the leper or the beggar but also in the bird and the wolf. In winter he replenished the beehives with honey. At Siena he built nests for the turtledoves. He even required that the roots of felled trees be left to enable the tree to sprout again. All living things, even the smallest worm, were his sisters and brothers—fellow creatures formed by the Creator and compelled to praise Him without ceasing. To the saint, God loved *all* his creatures and *all* creatures were obliged to love God and each other. This attitude was clearly neither a Christianized naturalistic pantheism nor an orientalist love of nature for its own sake. Nor was it simply escapism. Numerous accounts show S. Francis' unquestionable certainty of the uniqueness of God as Creator apart from, but glorified by, his creation. Similarly, the saint's fearless preaching and exhausting travels belie any charges of escapism. His interpretation of nature was at once wholly symbolic and wholly spiritual.

Unfortunately, with the passage of time, the apparent child-like naïveté of S. Francis has clouded our understanding of his relationship with nature. If there was a naïveté, it was a studied naïveté arrived at after years of worldly maturity ; a rediscovered humility as a small

creature among many in God's incomprehensible creation. If God was to be found within, He was just as fully present without, in his sensate world. Seen in this light, S. Francis' dancing and singing in the countryside (and even before the pope !) is no more naive than, and fully as natural and spontaneous as, the flying and singing of the skylarks. The unique joyful humility of the saint was no doubt tempered by Christ's assurance that the Father values men much more than sparrows (Mt. 6 : 26), thus increasing man's responsibility to God. This realization was verified more than once when S. Francis requested silence of the birds as the friars were about to sing the Office. Nevertheless, S. Francis strongly felt that men should never presume the Father's love but constantly humble themselves before him and strive to do his will.

Humility before God seems to explain S. Francis' relationship with the animals. Yet for many, there is a lingering sentimentality. The famous scene of the saint preaching to the birds, and their response, seems to us 'moderns' simply a charming Doctor Doolittle-like fairytale devoid of fact. Is it ? Again and again in the *Little Flowers* and related accounts we read of the saint's apparent power over animals, an ability to 'instantly domesticate' any creature, even enabling the animal to understand the saint's thoughts. This power is most dramatically illustrated by the conversion of the man-eating wolf of Gubbio into a docile dog. S. Francis made the sign of the cross at the advancing wolf, commanded him to do no harm, reprimanded him for killing without God's 'license'. The saint promised that the citizens of Gubbio would feed him, as they did the friars, and the wolf, now gentle, agreed by putting his paw into S. Francis' hand. In Gubbio, the saint preached with the tamed wolf at his side, warning the townspeople of the dangers of an unrepentant soul ; far worse than the jaws of a wolf.

There are numerous similar accounts : the cicada at Porziuncola that—like the birds at Venice—stopped chirping at the saint's request ; the sheep in Siena that surrounded him and bleated at him ; the pheasant and the freed hare that refused to leave him ; the freed fish in Lake Pediluco that followed the boat until dismissed ; the falcon that woke the saint for night prayers except when he was sick, etc. In the famous sermon to the birds near Cannara, the diverse assembled birds listened in silence, did not even move when S. Francis walked among them and his habit touched them. The saint admonished them

to praise God for his love of them, and to never be ungrateful. After his blessing the birds rose and departed in four directions. A similar but less well-known sermon to the fishes took place at Baschi on the Tiber.

Can all this be myth? It seems far more likely that S. Francis was granted extraordinary powers by the Holy Spirit in order that God might be further glorified. One can recall similar gifts granted to other saints—S. Cuthbert and the otters, S. Giles and the hind, S. Anthony and the lions, etc. S. Francis was so filled with the Spirit that lesser creatures, even insects, received a miraculous sensing and/or understanding of spiritual power, joy, and love. Here was a living prophecy of Teilhard de Chardin's Omega Point—the evolutionary and eschatological apex in which all creation will join together in Christ. It was thus both scriptural and prophetic that S. Francis' creche at Greccio had a live ox and ass joining in praise and wonder before the newborn Messiah.

S. Francis combined an irrepressible joy with a deep symbolic understanding of the natural world. His joy became fully evident when he was with the birds, his favourites among God's creatures. Often he burst into song with them, and was sometimes levitated among them in a mystic trance. Most contemporary ornithologists will admit that although much birdsong has specific behavioural purposes, a certain amount is spontaneous, joyful song. Similarly flight, although largely utilitarian, has an element of joyful freedom. It is easy to see in S. Francis' joy an interpretation of, and participation in, birdsong as praising God and flight as God's freedom. Indeed, all of nature was a symbolic expression of God to the saint. Lambs symbolized the Lamb of God, trees the Cross, rock the Church. S. Francis refused to snuff out candles because they symbolized God, and he always left part of the friary vegetable plots for flowers since 'not even Solomon was robed like one of these' (Mt. 6 : 29).

S. Francis' rich sensitivity to natural things permeated his life, and it is not surprising that he received the stigmata not in an enclosed cell but on the wild, cloud-swept heights of La Verna. Nor is it surprising that, deeply ill and full of disappointment, his soul suddenly welled up with joy and love of the Creator in the convent garden at San Damiano. The great *Canticle of the Creatures* reveals an understanding of the wholeness and interrelatedness of creation unique in 1225. Even Sister Death was included, her beneficial aspects emphasized.

The whole song-poem, and S. Francis' entire understanding of creation, is summed up in the last stanza : ' O creatures all, praise and bless my Lord and grateful be,/And serve him with deep humility'. On completion of the poem, he asked the brothers to go out and sing it wherever they went, spreading the contagious joy of creation. At the moment of the saint's death, several months later, a flight of skylarks rose from the roof of the cell where he lay, beautifully expressing his view of creation and the long-denied freedom of his soul.

If S. Francis' jongleur spirituality and love of nature were expressions of naïveté, it was a naïveté raised to sublime mystical heights, an example to all of us who misuse creation or ignore its beauty. Through S. Francis we can learn to love the miracle that is nature for the love of Him who made and sustains it.

SAN FRANCISCO.

MICHAEL D. LAMPEN.

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An Exchange of Looks

A paving slab sort of day
 And a routine walk past All Souls.
 To a lecture, was it ?
 A Friar happened to approach,
 Small and billowing,
 With strange watery eyes
 That were begging to be spoken to.
 We exchange looks.
 There began what neither of us had intended—
 A series of conversations
 In which Peter's prevision
 Led me to make decisions.
 Then, as simply, he walked out of my life.
 Now when I walk the streets
 I wonder what conversations,
 What new starts, might arise
 Out of another such exchange of looks.

JEREMY HARVEY.

Books

Sons of God

Our Prayer. *By Louis Evely.* Mowbrays, 143 pp., £1.75.

This may be the prod you need, though the author is aiming his pen within his own Roman Catholic community. In many ways Louis Evely is giving to the Seventies what Quoist brought into the early Sixties—fresh, bracing, invigorating air, much needed to correct lingering attitudes behind personal devotion. ‘Do you think you pray to God? No, it is God who prays to you’. (p. 16). In a loving temper and a direct style, Evely attacks his Church’s complacency, its presumptions and set ways: ‘It’s we who have to change, be changed, through prayer, not God who will incline to our subtle pleadings’. To expose and outroot ‘pagan religion’ is his basic motive in seven strong chapters which constantly appeal to the pages of the Gospel and the common decency of God.

In naturalising the supernatural, he recommends his readers to use ‘super-

natural tact’ and listen!—‘So few people know how to listen: most conversations are criss-crossing monologues’ (p. 55). He spells out the natural implications of incarnation, and calls for a truly filial and responsible relationship with the Father. Incidentally he also suggests why the church is so unacceptable and irrelevant to most secular folk today. Yes, there is in this book a wealth of generally excellent, necessary and challenging directives. An interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer at the end sums up all his thoughts.

Anglicans may feel his heavy activist emphasis unbalanced in their own setting; they haven’t quite the same problems to overcome. Yet all Christians may welcome this latest book by the increasingly popular Belgian writer.

DAMIAN S.S.F.

New Testament Themes

The Will to Believe. *By Rudolph Schnackenburg.*
Darton, Longman and Todd, 118 pp., 80p.

The trouble with many books containing meditations on the New Testament is that they are devout at the expense of being theologically unacceptable to those who have any insight at all into modern critical discussions on the Bible. Here is a book which contains many profound insights into the New Testaments and relates this to the situation of Christians today. The author is both a noted biblical scholar and a deeply committed Christian; both these qualities are seen in his writing. His aim is to ‘strengthen the faith of Christian people in a time of uncertainty and challenge’.

The book ends with a personal prof-

ession of faith: ‘... all these upheavals, the sheer “historicity” of everything human, the transitoriness of human ideologies, the short-lived vogue of even the most passionate popular movements have only led me to adhere more closely still to Jesus of Nazareth’.

It is hoped that this book will be recommended by theological colleges and universities to Christian students beginning for the first time a study of theology. It could also be profitably read by the parish priest as well as intelligent laymen.

SIMON S.S.F.,
Novice.

Mythology

The City of the Gods. A Study in Myth and Mythology. By *John S. Dunne*.

Sheldon Press, Paperback, 243 pp., £1.95.

This scholarly and fascinating book fills a gap in the history of man's thinking. Shakespeare's Cleopatra said, 'I have immortal longings in me' and this innate reaching forward beyond mortality can be the glory or tragedy of human existence; glory, if the longing can be substantiated, tragedy, if the end is disillusionment.

As the author states early in the book—Eternal life is a mystery, and a myth is an interpretation of mystery. So the modern 'Death of God' is as much a myth as 'The King must die'.

Professor Dunne with admirable impartiality traces human reaction to the inevitability of death from Sumerian and Egyptian cultures, through Greek and Roman civilisations, taking in something of Asiatic thought, down to modern existentialism, which he views

as an ostrich hiding its head in the sand!

Most philosophers have illuminated the subject, or 'darkened counsel' concerning the question, just as all great tragedians and poets, Shakespeare in his comedies as well as his tragedies, have poignantly forced us to look at the picture. An interesting aspect brought to light is that man's reaction to the problem of death and eternal life influences and is influenced by his political thought and social *milieu*.

The book is not meant to be a christian apologetic, but the author comes to the conclusion that 'death is not a human soluble problem'. The only answer is found in Christ. 'I lay down my life, and I take it up again'—'I am the Resurrection and the Life'.

A SISTER C.S.Cl.

Theological Study Guide

History of Israel : Old Testament Introduction 1. By *David F. Hinson*.

The Books of the Old Testament : Old Testament Introduction 2.

By *David F. Hinson*.

Setback and Recovery : A.D. 500—1500 : Church History 2. By *John Foster*.

Go . . . and Make Disciples : Applied Theology 1. By *A. C. Krass*.

S.P.C.K., Probably £1.25.

These books, and others in the Theological Study Guide Series 'are prepared by and in consultation with theological teachers in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Special attention has been given to problems of interpretation and application which may arise in such places, and to the particular needs of students using English as a second language'. This may well explain a tendency to repetition, though this will probably be useful.

The scope of each book is, of course, vast. The *History of Israel* takes us from the Patriarchs to Palm Sunday in two hundred pages. *The Books of the Old Testament* goes on to relate this to the text. In each case the teaching matter marries the broad view to the more detailed treatment, in a readable way which can give a foundation that students—novices and postulants, even—will build on their own study and appreciation. *Setback and Recovery* sets the English Church, and indeed the

Western Church, in the context of other world faiths and other continents, and yet is able to pick out the salient points and personalities of our own Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The standpoint throughout is balanced, modern and up-to-date : not only in scholarship and practical application, but also in many new diagrams, maps and (especially in *Go . . . and make Disciples*, provocative) pictures. There are study suggestions

and discussion points to each chapter ; essentially basic stuff that will be useful at the level at which this series is aimed.

Go . . . and make Disciples, though based on the author's experience in Ghana, discusses many principles relevant to the presenting the Gospel in more sophisticated climes. I envy the choirmaster in Appendix 5—with two whole hours for Choir Practice in a forty-eight-hour Retreat.

JOHN DEREK S.S.F.

Catholic and Existentialist

Prayer. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. S.P.C.K. (Reissue), £2.25.

Doctor von Balthasar's theme is the Word of God. He proclaims it with the single-mindedness of a Hebrew prophet, the God-centredness of Barth, and the careful intensity of a great scholastic. Prayer is the response to God's immediate and sovereign Word challenging us anew every moment in total freedom—and here one remembers that Doctor von Balthasar is also the heir of the existentialists. He has achieved a synthesis of Catholic and existentialist thought which is as powerful as it is complete. In this book he applies his doctrine to contemplative prayer, seeing prayer as wholly based within the Blessed Trinity. Every moment of fresh obedience to the Word of God is a sharing in that life of mutual giving and in the redemptive work of Christ, as the contemplative's obedience is taken up into the obedience of the Son to the Father and into the Father's creative love. So difficult and central a truth can never be insisted on enough, and a book on it by such a master is like water to quench a thirst. Yet in the end it has a faintly metallic taste. It is hard to dissociate oneself from any all-embracing scheme of thought, and perhaps ungracious to try ; yet the very completeness here is a little frightening.

There is really no room for any other tradition than that of Latin Christendom ; existentialism is made to serve it, and so, one feels, would anything else. In spite of the insistence on the freedom of the Word of God, his activity is pretty strictly laid down for him. ' (The Church) has but one interlocutor, namely God, nor in her intercourse with him is there any other partner, such as the rest of mankind, who have not the faith '. Elsewhere we are assured that the contemplative's prayer cannot possibly benefit anyone outside the Body of Christ. The fact is that this book is steeped in the tranquil self-assurance of pre-Vatican II Catholicism (it was first published in 1957) and this cannot but jar on Anglican readers, in spite of the healing influence of its reissue by S.P.C.K. with a foreword by the Bishop of Oxford. Thus we have not yet the insights which have come to the whole Church about Christ's servanthood. For Doctor von Balthasar, God is sovereign ; he is less clearly shown as humble. The Word, made flesh, is with God ; it is not so plain that the Word was spoken in Galilean Aramaic (laughed at in Jerusalem). The author speaks movingly of the absences of God the contemplative must endure, knowing

them as 'modes and presences of love', but is there not a still greater brokenness and lostness, a more desolate cry from the depths of secularized mankind, scarcely to be known as prayer, laid on many now, and how can it be said that Christ has not descended into that hell too? Certainly contemplatives today may become aware sometimes of sharing

and giving voice to a far wider, more inarticulate distress than the tribulations merely of the Church Militant. Yet this is to cavil. *Prayer* is a lastingly helpful book (although a Germanically solid one) by a great man, great surely because himself profoundly steeped in trinitarian contemplation.

FREELAND.

A SISTER C.S.C.I.

No Easy Compromise

Victory Over Violence. *By Martin Hengel.*

With an Introduction by Robin Scroggs. S.P.C.K., 93 pp., £1.30 (paperback).

This penetrating study of the political background of the world of Jesus as well as the Word of Jesus to it ought to be read by everyone who is concerned with the Christian message of peace. Martin Hengel has presented us with a summary of the fruits of his previous work giving an informative outline of the political situation in Palestine from Alexander to Bar Cochba and the various reactions of Judaism during this era of violence—the Pious, the Qumran Community, Zealots, the Apocalyptic Writers and Messianic Pretenders.

In stark contrast to various political solutions stands Jesus. Hengel parts company with such scholars as the late S. G. F. Brandon who postulated a close relationship between the Christian Movement and the various brands of revolutionary Judaism. He believes that Jesus' law of love, his proclamation of God's Kingdom as well as the close identification of himself with the coming Son of Man points us not only to Jesus' message of peace but also to the Man as the embodiment of it. Further the Early Church until the time of Constantine faithfully followed in the steps of its founder.

It is unfortunate that such a remarkable piece of work is preceded by a

rather disappointing introduction. Obviously geared to the American situation, Robin Scroggs attempts to put Hengel's work into the context of the present debate on Christianity and Revolutionary violence. Anyone who can seriously say that 'main stream Christianity has provided few models for revolutionary change' ought to read a life of S. Francis. The fact that Hengel's account of first century Palestine can be called 'almost Hegelian' shows the dangerous extent to which philosophical presuppositions can prejudice historical analysis. Those who use uncritically the in-jargon of fashionable 'Political Theology' ought to take note of one prophetic theologian who wrote in 1967 'The doctrine of the divine superman died at Auschwitz, and with it anthropology as disguise for theology. The self-exaltation of man and the definition of reality in exclusively human terms lead to the denial of freedom which obliterates the divine image' (Ulrich Simon—*A Theology of Auschwitz* p. 158).

Martin Hengel's book is a welcome contribution after much naive writing from one side of the Atlantic which has pictured Jesus Christ as a first century Robin Hood and Augustine as a 'type' of Marx.

SIMON S.S.F.

Key to Life

Dynamic of Love. By Mark Gibbard S.S.J.E. Mowbrays, 117 pp., 80p.

'Only Love can unlock locked-up love. Are we ready to be loved? It's a bit demanding facing that question' (p. 72) comments Father Gibbard as he explores the common path of Christian living and loving in practical terms. He writes for those for whom Christian faith is a new venture, but his words are equally valid and helpful to the rest of us who underneath know we are still novices! It may not however be a youngster's handbook because he draws a lot on personal adult experiences.

Yet Mark Gibbard is a spiritual Father, and he writes in careful regard for the needs of ordinary people whose feelings he clearly understands. I love his simplicity as he channels the fruits of his own vocation as a Cowley Father and as an Anglican Priest, his learning and sensitivity—and most of all his

enormous love for Jesus, so that his style often appears to echo a discussion between the two of them when they last met. The result is powerful and reassuring—for he is a faith-builder.

The skeleton of the ten chapters cover such subjects as the Church, Sacraments, contemplation, failure, Bible, heaven; yet constantly he gives prior importance to the simple attitudes of life, claiming love to be more important than anything and praying as the key to life. The result is that Father Gibbard wants me to be more truly alive, more *human*. His urgent encouragement is persuasive and personal: 'if I am going to remain truly human, let alone Christian, I have somehow or other to open myself day by day to this warm, humanising love that comes from God' (p. 29). This book says *How*. DAMIAN S.S.F.

Theology and Contemplation

Elucidations. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. S.P.C.K., £3.50.

This collection of essays is at once an *apologia* for traditional Christian faith in the modern world and a compelling invitation to approach the significant and divisive questions facing the church from a more spiritual and less speculative viewpoint than is typical of recent theological writing. What Balthasar presents in this book lacks nothing in the way of precision, penetration and density of thought, but for all that, his style breathes of the mystic's urge to lure us beyond the limits of knowing. His concern is to point the Christian and the church of today back to, or rather on to, God; but in order to do this he must first point them away from a veritable jungle of false alternatives and trendy simplifications. Thus, in his essay *The priest I want*, he makes abundantly

clear what he does not want: 'There are too many who, as they stand at their lecture desks or in their pulpits, imagine that they are of light; one must avoid them. Ostensibly they speak about God, but it is to themselves that they refer. There are others who dream up methods of attracting people's attention... There are the deserters who... side-stepped the real issue and allowed love of God to be submerged into love of one's neighbour...'. What Balthasar wants is priests dispossessed of themselves and possessed of God, but as Balthasar admits, 'the sacramental grace of the priestly office... helps him (the priest) to dispossess himself, but it is not a substitute for such dispossession. The ordained man who does not open himself to such grace will be marked out

negatively by it. There is a particular sort of spirituality which only . . . the priest who has failed can exhibit. Stupid, crafty, busy and imposing . . . He lies like mildew on the fields of the church . . .

The main thrust of this book is, however, not the current malaise of the church, but the situation of every believer or seeker who must find his way beyond that malaise in order to be addressed by the challenge of the Christian faith. 'What is demanded of the Church is simply that it as well as the individual Christian, should keep its eyes fixed on the content of the evangelical, primitive Christian faith . . . There are here greater matters than making statistical judgments. It is indeed more important to keep in the heart of Christians the dynamic which drives them to follow the simple, shining and demanding ideal of faith at a time when their small boats are threatening to capsize in the heavy seas of our time . . .'

Balthasar's mastery of the theology of prayer and contemplation is not

obscured by the practical, down-to-earth bent of many of the essays. 'How are we to explain the fact that we take a saint of the desert (Charles de Foucauld) . . . ?'. Yet, he adds, 'one can also find the desert in prison, in the concentration camps . . .' and indeed, in 'the grey monotony of life in an office or a factory, in disappointment in a person, increasing loneliness in old age . . .'.

Balthasar sees contemporary man standing in helpless disillusionment, but, he says, 'this should not distract us from what is most important, that I, and always I, am the sinner in the sight of that (God's) love which calls me out . . .'. But that love which opens a way out is for Balthasar no more an escape than a key to utopia realised here and now. Through that love, 'one frees a bit of the world (which is me) from its tenseness and tautness'. Surely this is a refreshing bit of good sense which everyone will recognize as the good news of the gospel. FRANS-ERIC S.S.F.,
Novice.

Holy Wisdom

Wisdom From Mount Athos: The Writings of Staretz Silouan 1886—1938.

By Archimandrite Sophrony. Translated by Rosemary Edmonds.

Mowbrays, 127 pp., £1.25.

This book breathes the spirit of an ageless devotion and is a deeply moving encounter with Orthodoxy at its best. The Archimandrite Sophrony's introduction is a good outline of the context within which the staretz' writings are to be read, and with charity makes plain the universal and uncompromising claims of Orthodoxy. English readers are grateful to Father Sophrony for making available to us in this and in the previous *The Monk of Mount Athos* (also published by Mowbrays) the wise counsels of a patently holy man who has

drunk deep at the wells of eternal wisdom. This collection breathes the spirit of authenticity, of a genuine encounter with the living God. There are wise spiritual and pastoral counsels. The task of the English reader is not to copy slavishly the devotional and spiritual idiom of the staretz, but to distil the great truths which have then to be incorporated in our own cultural and spiritual tradition. If at times the severity of the Russian monastic asceticism is off-putting to the modern Western reader then that only rightly

prompts a questioning of our own *ascesis* but it needs to be set in the context of such gentle, practical wisdom as : 'Look to the man who likes to have his own way. His soul is never at peace and he is always discontented : this is not right and that is not as it should be. But the man who is entirely given over to the will of God can pray with a pure mind, his soul loves the Lord, and he finds everything pleasant and agreeable' (p. 73). This is a book

to be re-read, pondered over and prayed through. It is no instant recipe for contemporary sanctity but a call to a life-long pilgrimage. It is a re-assertion of a great classical tradition which does not merely *survive* but is *alive*. One testimony, and that a most convincing one, to the staretz' influence today and to the vitality and agelessness of his teaching, is the Orthodox monastery in Essex of which Father Sophrony is the Father.

✠ JOHN CHARLES S.S.F.

Pastoral Scholar

Peter Browne : Provost-Bishop-Metaphysician. By A. R. Winnett.

S.P.C.K., 260 pp. with appendices, bibliography and index, £4.95.

This is a study of a long-neglected eighteenth century divine of the Church of Ireland who deserves an honourable place in the history of theology and the history of philosophical thought. A reappraisal of his importance is likely in our day as his writings deal with issues which once again exercise men's minds, viz. transcendence, the possibility and the manner of our knowledge of God, the character of religious language, and the place of analogy in formulating theological expression.

In his two principal works Browne dealt at length with the nature of analogy and entered into several series of controversies on this issue. Of particular interest are his dealings with Berkeley who was a pupil when Browne was Provost of Trinity College, Dublin and later the bishop of a neighbouring diocese to those of Cork and Ross where Browne was from 1710 to 1735.

Canon Winnett has given a succinct account of the positions adopted by Peter Browne, not only in his writings

but in his sermons.

Browne was not only a philosopher and theologian but an able Provost of Trinity College, a zealous and pastorally wise diocesan bishop and, as his private devotions make clear, a man of deep personal piety. His prayer book deserves a place alongside Andrewes' *Preces Privatae* and Wilson's *Sacra Privata*. Sadly this book has never been published. This and his teaching on the eucharist make it clear that Browne was a High Churchman of the Caroline tradition, and his guidance for the parochial clergy and his emphasis on pastoral visitation are still apposite. It is sad that so much of his energies were dissipated in what for us can only be seen as rather sterile controversy.

It is interesting to note that as a bishop he preferred always that confirmation and first communion should be administered together.

Canon Winnett's presentation is scholarly, lucid and attractively written.

✠ JOHN CHARLES S.S.F.



JEGARATA

*Brother Simon Peter and Brother Randolph (with Scottie) at the chapel built
in the shape of a Sepik spirit temple at Saint Francis' College*